

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."—SHAKESPEARE.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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A DAY'S RIDE: A LIFE'S ROMANCE.

CHAPTER XIII.

BREAKFAST over, I took a walk through the town. Though in a measure prepared for a scene of unbustling quietude and tranquillity, I must own that the air of repose around far surpassed all I had imagined. The streets through which I sauntered were grass-grown and untrodden; the shops were but half open; not an equipage, nor even a horseman was to be seen. In the Platz, where a sort of fruit-market was held, a few vendors of grapes, peaches, and melons sat under large crimson umbrellas, but there seemed few purchasers, except a passing schoolboy, carefully scanning the temptations in which he was about to invest his kreutzer.

The most remarkable feature of the place, however, and it is one which through a certain significance has always held its place in my memory, was that, go where one would, the palace of the grand-duke was sure to finish the view at one extremity of the street. In fact, every alley converged to this one centre, and the royal residence stood like the governor's chamber in a panopticon gaol. There did my mind for many a day picture him sitting like a huge spider watching the incautious insects that permeated his web. I imagined him fat, indolent, and apathetic, but yet with a gaoler's instincts, ever mindful of every stir and movement of the prisoners below. With a very ordinary telescope he must be master of everything that went on, and the humblest incident could not escape his notice. Was it the consciousness of this surveillance that made every one keep the house? Was it the feeling that the "Gross Herzogliche" eye never left them, that prevented men being abroad in the streets and about their affairs as in other places? I half suspected this, and set to work imagining a state of society thus scanned and scrutinised. But that the general aspect of the town so palpably proclaimed the absence of all trade and industry, I might have compared the whole to a glass hive; but they were all drones that dwelt there, there was not one "busy bee" in the whole of them.

While I rambled thus carelessly along, I came in front of a sort of garden fenced from the street by an iron railing. The laurel, and arbutus, and even the oleander, were there, grace-

fully blending a varied foliage, and contrasting in their luxuriant liberty so pleasantly with the dull uniformity outside. Finding a gate wide open, I strolled in and gave myself up to the delicious enjoyment of the spot. As I was deliberating whether this was a public garden or not, I found myself before a long, low, villa-like building, with a colonnade in front. Over the entrance was a large shield, which on nearer approach I recognised to contain the arms of England. This, therefore, was the legation, the residence of our minister, Sir Shalley Doubleton. I felt a very British pride and satisfaction to see our representative lodged so splendidly. With all the taxpayer's sentiment in my heart, I rejoiced to think that he who personated the nation should, in all his belongings, typify the wealth, the style, and the grandeur of England, and in the ardour of this enthusiasm I hastened back to the inn for the despatch-bag.

Armed with this, and a card, I soon presented myself at the door. On the card I had written, "Mr. Pottinger presents his respectful compliments, and requests his excellency will favour him with an audience of a few minutes for an explanation."

I had made up my mind to state that my servant, in removing my smaller luggage from the train, had accidentally carried off this Foreign-office bag, which, though at considerable inconvenience, I had travelled much out of my way to restore in person. I had practised this explanation as I dressed in the morning, I had twice rehearsed it to an orange-tree in the garden, before which I had bowed till my back ached, and I fancied myself perfect in my part. It would, I confess, have been a great relief to me to have had only the slightest knowledge of the great personage before whom I was about to present myself, to have known was he short or tall, young or old, solemn or easy-mannered, had he a loud voice and an imperious tone, or was he of the soft and silky order of his craft. I'd have willingly entertained his "gentleman" at a moderate repast for some information on these points, but there was no time for the inquiry, and so I rang boldly at the bell. The door opened of itself at the summons, and I found myself in a large hall with a plaster cast of the Laocoon, and nothing else. I tried several of the doors on either side, but they were all locked. A very handsome and spacious stair of

white marble led up from the middle of the hall, but I hesitated about venturing to ascend this, and once more repaired to the bell outside, and repeated my summons. The loud clang re-echoed through the arched hall, the open door gave a responsive shake, and that was all. No one came; everything was still as before. I was rather chagrined at this. The personal inconvenience was less offensive than the feeling how foreigners would comment on such want of propriety, what censures they would pass on such an ill-arranged household. I rang again, this time with an energy that made the door strike some of the plaster from the wall, and, with a noise like cannon, "What the hangman!"—I am translating—"is all this?" cried a voice thick with passion; and on looking up I saw a rather elderly man, with a quantity of curly yellow hair, frowning savagely on me from the balcony over the stair. He made no sign of coming down, but gazed sternly at me from his eminence.

"Can I see his excellency the minister?" said I, with dignity.

"Not if you stop down there, not if you continue to ring the bell like an alarm for fire, not if you won't take the trouble to come up-stairs."

I slowly began the ascent at these words, pondering what sort of a master such a man must needs have. As I gained the top, I found myself in front of a very short, very fat man, dressed in a suit of striped gingham, like an over plethoric zebra, and wheezing painfully, in part from asthma, in part from agitation. He began again:

"What the hangman do you mean by such a row? Have you no manners, no education? Where were you brought up that you enter a dwelling-house like a city in storm?"

"Who is this insolent creature that dares to address me in this wise? What ignorant menial can have so far forgotten my rank and his insignificance?"

"I'll tell you all that presently," said he; "there's his excellency's bell." And he bustled away, as fast as his unwieldy size would permit, to his master's room.

I was outraged and indignant. There was I, Potts—no, Pottinger—Algernon Sydney Pottinger—on my way to Italy and Greece, turning from my direct road to consign with safety a despatch-bag which many a less conscientious man would have chucked out of his carriage window and forgotten—there I stood to be insulted by a miserable stone-polishing, floor-scrubbing, carpet-twigging Hausknecht! Was this to be borne? was it to be endured? Was a man of station, family, and attainments, to be the object of such indignity?"

Just as I had uttered this speech aloud, a very gentle voice addressed me, saying:

"Perhaps I can assist you? Will you be good enough to say what you want?"

I started suddenly, looked up, and whom should I see before me but that Miss Herbert, the beautiful girl in deep mourning that I had met at Milford, and who now, in the same pale loveli-

ness, turned on me a look of kind and gentle meaning.

"Do you remember me?" said I, eagerly. "Do you remember the traveller—a pale young man, with a Glengary cap and a plaid overcoat—who met you at Milford?"

"Perfectly," said she, with a slight twitch about the mouth like a struggle against a smile. "Will you allow me to repay you now for your politeness then? Do you wish to see his excellency?"

I'm not very sure what it was I replied, but I know well what was passing through my head. If my thoughts could have spoken, it would have been in this wise:

"Angel of loveliness, I don't care a brass farthing for his excellency. It is not a matter of the slightest moment to me if I ever set eyes on him. Let me but speak to you, tell you the deep impression you have made upon my heart; how, in my ardour to serve you, I have already been involved in an altercation that might have cost me my life; how I still treasure up the few minutes I passed beside you as the Elysian dream of all my life!"

"I am certain, sir," broke she in while I spoke—I repeat, I know not what—"I am certain, sir, that you never came here to mention all this to his excellency."

There was a severe gravity in the way that she said these words that recalled me to myself, but not to any consciousness of what I had been saying; and so, in my utter discomfiture, I blundered out something about the lost despatches and the cause of my coming.

"If you'll wait a moment here," said she, opening a door into a neatly furnished room, "his excellency shall hear of your wish to see him." And before I could answer, she was gone.

I was now alone, but in what wild perplexity and anxiety! How came she here? What could be the meaning of her presence in this place? The minister was an unmarried man, so much my host had told me. How then reconcile this fact with the presence of one who had left England but a few days ago, as some said, to be a governess or a companion? Oh, the agony of my doubts, the terrible agony of my dire misgivings! What a world of iniquity do we live in, what vice and corruption are ever around us! It was but a year or two ago, I remember, that the Times newspaper had exposed the nefarious schemes of a wretch who had deliberately invented a plan to entrap those most unprotected of all females. The adventures of this villain had become part of the police literature of Europe. Young and attractive creatures, induced to come abroad by promises of the most seductive kind, had been robbed by this man of all they possessed, and deserted here and there throughout the Continent. I was so horror-stricken by the terrors my mind had so suddenly conjured up, that I could not acquire the calm and coolness requisite for a process of reasoning. My over-active imagination, as usual, went off with me, clearing obstacles with a sweeping

stride, and steeple-chasing through fact as though it were only a gallop over grass land.

"Poor girl, well might you look confused and overwhelmed at meeting me! well might the flush of shame have spread over your neck and shoulders, and well might you have hurried away from the presence of one who had known you in the days of your happy innocence!" I'm not sure that I didn't imagine I had been her playfellow in childhood, and that we had been brought up from infancy together. My mind then addressed itself to the practical question, What was to be done? Was I to turn my head away while this iniquity was being enacted? Was I to go on my way forgetting the seeds of that misery whose terrible fruits must one day be a shame and an open ignominy? or was I to arraign this man, great and exalted as he was, and say to him, "Is it thus you represent before the eyes of the foreigner the virtues of that England we boast to be the model of all morality? Is it thus you illustrate the habits of your order? Do you dare to profane what, by the fiction of diplomacy, is called the soil of your country, by a life that you dare not pursue at home? The Parliament shall hear of it, the Times shall ring with it; that magnificent institution, the common sense of England, long sick of what is called secret diplomacy, shall learn at last to what uses are applied the wiles and snares of this deceitful craft, its extraordinary and its private missions, its hurried messengers with their bags of corruption——"

I was well "into my work," and going along slappingly, when a very trim footman, in a nankeen jacket, said:

"If you will come this way, sir, his excellency will see you."

He led me through three or four salons handsomely furnished and ornamented with pictures, the most conspicuous of which, in each room, was a life-sized portrait of the same gentleman, though in a different costume—now in the Windsor uniform, now as a Guardsman, and, lastly, in the full dress of the diplomatic order. I had but time to guess that this must be his excellency, when the servant announced me and retired.

It is in deep shame that I own that the aspect of the princely apartments, the silence, the implied awe of the footman's subdued words as he spoke, had so routed all my intentions about calling his excellency to account, that I stood in his presence timid and abashed. It is an ignoble confession wrung out of the very heart of my snobbery, that no sooner did I find myself before that thin, pale, grey-headed man, who, in a light silk dressing-gown and slippers, sat writing away, than I gave up my brief and inwardly resigned my place as a counsel for injured innocence.

He never raised his head as I entered, but continued his occupation without noticing me, muttering below his breath the words as they fell from his pen. "Take a seat," said he curtly, at last. Perceiving now that he was fully aware of my presence, I sat down without reply. "This bag is late, Mr. Paynter," said he, blandly,

as he laid down his pen and looked me in the face.

"Your excellency will permit me, in limine, to observe that my name is not Paynter."

"Possibly, sir," said he haughtily; "but you are evidently before me for the first time, or you would know that, like my great colleague and friend, Prince Metternich, I have made it a rule through life never to burden my memory with whatever can be spared it, and of these are the patronymics of all subordinate people; for this reason, sir, and to this end, every cook in my establishment answers to the name of Honoré, my valet is always Pierre, my coachman Jacob, my groom is Charles, and all foreign messengers I call Paynter. The original of that appellation is, I fancy, superannuated or dead, but he lives in some twenty successors who carry canvas reticules as well as he."

"The method may be convenient, sir, but it is scarcely complimentary," said I, stiffly.

"Very convenient," said he, complacently.

"All consuls I address as Mr. Sloper. You can't fail to perceive how it saves time, and I rather think that in the end they like it themselves. When did you leave town?"

"I left on Saturday last. I arrived at Dover by the express train, and it was there that the incident befel me by which I have now the honour to stand before your excellency."

Instead of bestowing the slightest attention on this exordium of mine, he had resumed his pen and was writing away glibly as before. "Nothing new stirring, when you left?" said he, carelessly.

"Nothing, sir. But to resume my narrative of explanation——"

"Come to dinner, Paynter; we dine at six," said he, rising hastily; and, opening a glass door into a conservatory, walked away, leaving me in a mingled state of shame, anger, humiliation, and, I will state, of ludicrous embarrassment, which I have no words to express.

"Dinner! No," exclaimed I, "if the alternative were a hard crust and a glass of spring water! not if I were to fast till this time to-morrow! Dine with a man who will not condescend to acknowledge even my identity, who will not deign to call me by my name, but only consents to regard me as a pebble on the seashore, a blade of grass in a wide meadow! Dine with him, to be addressed as Mr. Paynter, and to see Pierre, and Jacob, and the rest of them looking on me as one of themselves! By what prescriptive right does this man dare to insult those who, for aught he can tell, are more than his equals in ability? Does the accident—and what other can it be than accident—of his station confer this privilege? How would he look if one were to retort with his own impertinence? What, for instance, if I were to say, 'I always call small diplomatists Bluebottles; you'll not be offended if, just for memory's sake, I address you as Bluebottle—Mr. Bluebottle, of course?'"

I was in ecstasies at this thought. It seemed to vindicate all my insulted personality, all my outraged and injured identity. "Yes," said I,

"I will dine with him; six o'clock shall see me punctual to the minute, and determined to avenge the whole insulted family of the Paynters. I defy him to assert that the provocation came not from *his* side. I dare him to show cause why I should be the butt of *his* humour, any more than he of *mine*. I will be prepared to make use of his own exact words in repelling my impertinence, and say, 'Sir, you have exactly embodied *my* meaning; you have to the letter expressed what this morning I felt on being called Mr. Paynter; you have, besides this, had the opportunity of experiencing the sort of pain such an impertinence inflicts, and you are now in a position to guide you as to how far you will persist in it for the future.'"

I actually revelled in the thought of this reprisal, and longed for the moment to come in which, indolently thrown back in my chair, I should say, "Bluebottle, pass the Madeira," with some comment on the advantage all the Bluebottles have in getting their wine duty free. Then, with what sarcastic irony I should condole with him over his wearisome, dull career, eternally writing home platitudes for blue-books, making Grotius into bad grammar, and vamping up old Puffendorf for popular reading. "Ain't you sick of it all, B.-B.?" I should say, familiarly; "is not the unreality of the whole thing offensive? Don't you feel that a despatch is a sort of formula in which Madrid might be inserted for Moscow, and what was said of Naples might be predicated of Norway?" I disputed a long time with myself at what precise period of the entertainment I should unmask my battery and open fire. Should it be in the drawing-room, before dinner? Should it be immediately after the soup, with the first glass of sherry? Ought I to wait till the dessert, and that time when a sort of easy intimacy had been established which might be supposed to prompt candour and frankness? Would it not be in better taste to defer it till the servants had left the room? To expose him to his household seemed scarcely fair.

These were all knotty points, and I revolved them long and carefully, as I came back to my hotel, through the same silent street.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Don't keep a place for me at the table d'hôte to-day, Kramm," said I, in an easy carelessness; "I dine with his excellency. I couldn't well get off the first day, but to-morrow I promise you to pronounce upon your good cheer."

I suppose I am not the first man who has derived consequence from the invitation it has cost him misery to accept. How many in this world of snobbery have felt that the one sole recompense for long nights of ennui was the fact that their names figured amongst the distinguished guests in the next day's Post?

"It is not a grand dinner to-day, is it?" asked Kramm.

"No, no, a merely family party; we are very old chums, and have much to talk over."

"You will then go in plain black, and with nothing but your 'decorations.'"

"I will wear none," said I, "none; not even a ribbon." And I turned away to hide the shame and mortification his suggestion had provoked.

Punctually at six o'clock I arrived at the legation; four powdered footmen were in the hall, and a decent-looking personage in black preceded me up the stairs, and opened the double doors into the drawing-room, without, however, announcing me, or paying the slightest attention to my mention of "Mr. Pottinger."

Laying down his newspaper as I entered, his excellency came forward with his hand out, and though it was the least imaginable touch, and his bow was grandly ceremonious, his smile was courteous and his manner bland.

"Charmed to find you know the merit of punctuality," said he. "To the untravelled English, six means seven, or even later. You may serve dinner, Robins. Strange weather we are having," continued he, turning to me; "cold, raw, and uncongenial."

We talked "barometer" till, the door opening, the maître d'hôtel announced, "His excellency is served;" a rather unpolite mode, I thought, of ignoring his company, and which was even more strongly impressed by the fact that he walked in first, leaving me to follow.

At the table a third "cover" was just being speedily removed as we entered, a fact that smote at my heart like a blow. The dinner began, and went on with little said; a faint question from the minister as to what the dish contained and a whispered reply constituted most of the talk, and an occasional cold recommendation to me to try this or that entrée. It was admirable in all its details, the cookery exquisite, the wines delicious, but there was an oppression in the solemnity of it all that made me sigh repeatedly. Had the butler been serving a high mass his motions at the sideboard could scarcely have been more reverential.

"If you don't object to the open air, we'll take our coffee on the terrace," said his excellency; and we soon found ourselves on a most charming elevation, surrounded on three sides with orange-trees, the fourth opening a magnificent view over a fine landscape with the Taunus mountains in the distance.

"I can offer you at least a good cigar," said the minister, as he selected with great care two from the number on a silver plateau before him. "These, I think, you will find recommendable; they are grown for myself at Cuba, and prepared after a receipt only known to one family."

In all this there was a dignified civility, not at all like the impertinent freedom of his manner in the morning. He never, besides, addressed me as Mr. Paynter; in fact, he did not advert to a name at all, not giving me the slightest pretext for that reprisal I had come so charged with; and as to opening the campaign myself, I'd as soon have commenced acquaintance with a tiger by a pull at his tail. We were now alone; the servants had retired, and there we sat,

silently smoking our cigars in apparent ease, but, one of us at least, in a frame of mind the very opposite to tranquillity. What a rush and conflict of thought was in my head! Why had not *she* dined with us? Was her position such as that the presence of a stranger became an embarrassment? Good Heaven! was I to suppose this, that, and the other? What was there in this man that so imposed on me that when I wanted to speak I only could sigh, and that I felt his presence like some overpowering spell? It was that calm, self-contained, quiet manner—cold rather than austere, courteous without cordiality—that chilled me to the very marrow of my bones. Lecture *him* on the private moralities of his life! ask *him* to render me an account of his actions! address *him* as Bluebottle!—

"With such tobacco as that, one can drink Bordeaux," said he. "Help yourself."

And I did help myself—freely, repeatedly. I drank for courage, as a man might drink from thirst or fever, or for strength in a moment of fainting debility. The wine was exquisite, and my heart beat more forcibly, and I felt it.

I cannot follow very connectedly the course of events; I neither know how the conversation glided into politics, nor what I said on that subject. As to the steps by which I succeeded in obtaining his excellency's confidence, I know as little as a man does of the precise moment in which he is wet through in a Scotch mist. I have a dim memory of talking in a very dictatorial voice, and continually referring to my "entrance into public life," with reference to what Peel "said," and what the Duke "told me."

"What's the use of writing home?" said his excellency, in a desponding voice. "For the last five years I have called attention to what is going on here: nobody minds, nobody heeds it. Open any blue-book you like, and will you find one solitary despatch from Hesse-Kalbratenstadt?"

"I cannot call one to mind."

"Of course you can't. Would you believe it, when the Zeringer party went out, and the Schlaffdorfers came in, I was rebuked—actually rebuked—for sending off a special messenger with the news? And then came out a despatch in cipher, which being interpreted contained this stupid doggrel:

Strange that such difference should be
Twixt Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee.

I ask, sir, is it thus the affairs of a great country can be carried on? The efforts of Russia here are incessant: a certain personage—I will mention no names—loves caviar, he likes it fresh, there is a special estafette established to bring it! I learned, by the most insidious researches, his fondness for English cheese; I lost no time in putting the fact before the cabinet I represented, that while timid men looked tremblingly towards France, the thoughtful politician saw the peril of Hesse-Kalbratenstadt. I urged them to lose no time:

"The grand-duchess has immense influence—countermine her," said I, "countermine her with a Stilton;" and, would you believe it, sir, they have not so much as sent out a Cheddar! What will the people of England say one of these days when they learn, as learn they shall, that at this mission here I am alone—that I have neither secretary nor attaché, paid or unpaid—that since the Crimean war the whole weight of the legation has been thrown upon me—nor is this all, but that a systematic course of treachery—I can't call it lies—has been adopted to entrap me, if such were possible? My despatches are unrelieved to, my questions all unanswered. I stand here with the peace of Europe in my hands, and none to counsel nor advise me. What will you say, sir, to the very last despatch I have received from Downing-street? It runs thus:

"I am instructed by his lordship to inform you that he views with indifference your statement of the internal condition of the grand-duchy, but is much struck by your charge for sealing-wax.

"I have, sir, &c."

"This is no longer to be endured. A public servant who has filled some of the most responsible of official stations—I was eleven years at Tragotà, in the Argentine Republic; I was a chargé at Oohululoo for eight months—the only European who ever survived an autumn there; they then sent me special to Cabanhos to negotiate the Salt-sprat treaty; after that—"

Here my senses grew muddy: the grey dim light, the soft influences of a good dinner and a sufficiency of wine, the drowsy tenor of the minister's voice, all conspired, and I slept as soundly as if in my bed. My next conscious moment was as his excellency moved his chair back, and said,

"I think a cup of tea would be pleasant; let us come into the drawing-room."

FIVE HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

HOUSES AND MODES OF LIVING.

TO-DAY you—who are, let us suppose, a provincial, and I, your London cicerone—will revisit some of the places which we passed yesterday,* and inspect such houses as may be unoccupied. The street by Oldbourne is perhaps the most healthy and pleasant, being situated on an eminence overlooking the gardens of Ely House and the fields of Iseldune. As we walk thither we may put you in possession of such information as may be needful for your guidance before making an agreement with the landlord of the house you may intend to rent.

By a recent civic ordinance, tenants at will, whose rent is under forty shillings yearly, must give their landlords a quarter's notice to deter-

* See number 76, page 608. At page 609, line 82, there is an error, which we take this opportunity of correcting. Instead of "1866, some eighteen years," the passage should have stood, "1877, some few weeks before the close of the reign of Edward the Third."

mine the tenancy. If the rent be above that sum, half a year's notice is required: neglect of this provision burdens you with the payment of rent for the additional quarter or half-year, unless you can obtain a tenant in your stead. The same notice is exacted from your landlord if he desires to oust you from possession, but, should he sell the house, the buyer may eject you at pleasure, unless you have a special agreement to the contrary.

Oldbourne-street, to which we are approaching, is in the ward of Farringdone, which is so extended by the number of houses built without the walls that there is an intention shortly to petition parliament to divide it into two wards—one within and one without. The houses to which we most commend you are newly built, a little higher up the hill than Thavie's Inn. This first one may be had at a rent of eighty shillings yearly. It is substantially erected, and finished with much care. The party-walls and chimneys, in conformity with the Assize of which we told you, are of freestone, brought, as it seems, from Maidstone in Kent: they are sixteen feet high and three feet thick. The paint on the ash-laring is gaudy in your eyes, no doubt, but is commonly employed with us, whose atmosphere being freer from smoke and many other vapours, agrees with bright colours better than yours. The mortar is of lime mixed with sand or broken tiles. The framework built upon the walls, and the gables, both front and back, are of wood, whitewashed with plaster of Paris. The roof is tiled and pitched high, so that rain may readily fall into the gutters at the side. The windows in houses of this description are not always glazed as here; but, of late, glass has been largely imported from Flanders, Normandy, and Lorraine, and the glaziers now constitute a mystery, or distinct trade.

If you happen to be acquainted with the principles of architectural construction, you will conclude, from the external appearance of the house, what is the fact, that the chief mechanical powers in use amongst you—as the crane and lewis, for example—are familiar to us. The numerous improvements made in the science of building are almost confined to the elaboration of machinery for obtaining increased expedition.

Let us now enter the house and see the plan of it. We first come to the vestibule leading to the hall, or sitting apartment. The latter, you may see from the single chimney, is one room, although divided into two by a wooden partition. Both are of good size, as houses run with us, though eight feet in height may be thought low. The floors are well planked, and, as well as the wainscoting, are of Norway fir. In houses of a better class than this, designs of figures or flowers are generally painted on the wainscoting. If you object to the aspect of these whitewashed walls, you can easily drape them with hangings, as we commonly do. That floriated ironwork on the lock of the door is of excellent workmanship. We obtain most of our iron from Spain, though there are extensive

bloomeries in the Forest of Dean, and at Furness in Lancashire. These aumbries, or, as you would call them, cupboards, are formed by means of arches in the wall, which, in accordance with the Assize, do not exceed a foot in depth.

On the right of the vestibule we come to the kitchen, which doubtless strikes you as strangely and inconveniently constructed. In houses of this description, and, indeed, in many of the better sort, it is usual to leave the kitchen uncovered, so that the smoke from the grate in the centre and the vapours of cooking may have free exit. This, of course, is objectionable in rainy weather, and we are beginning to use roofs and chimneys, the expense of constructing which hinders their general adoption. The floor here being unplanked, the refuse is carried off by this gutter into a sink outside. The buttery (the larder of your country) is on the other side of the vestibule. The entrance to the cellars is by the steps outside, in the curtilage or courtyard.

Let us now ascend by this internal staircase to the solar or upper chamber. In older houses than this you will often find the staircase external. The solar, like the hall, is one room divided by wooden partitions. The compartment that contains the chimney you will of course make your own chamber. The other rooms, with central hearths and louvers above, are not so pleasant. The windows here, you see, are not glazed, but protected by wooden shutters, and lattices filled in with canvas. It is not unfrequent to glaze the upper lights, and keep the wooden shutters for the lower. At the back we look out on the curtilage and garden sloping down to the houses on the Fleet banks. There is a well in the former, together with a sink for refuse water, faced with stone. Our drainage in London, by the way, though far behind yours, is not ill managed. Besides private sinks, there is a common drain in the great streets communicating with the houses. The Thames is happily little polluted by the discharge of sewage, much of which falls into the town ditch. There are strict and continual regulations issued to keep the highways clear from rubbish, and officers are appointed by each ward to see that these ordinances are put in force. There are also rakers, as we have said, whose duty it is to remove the garbage to places made to receive it. These places are periodically cleansed, the contents being carried away in carts provided by the City.

You will be glad to know what precautions we take against peril from fire, and the attacks of enemies. Certain provisions against the former are exacted from all builders of houses in the City—such as the construction of stone chimneys, and the prohibition of thatched roofs, and ovens placed near timber structures. It is further demanded of all the holders of large houses that they keep a ladder or two for the rescue of their neighbours, and in summer a large water-vessel always full. Each ward is bound to keep ready for use an iron crook,

two chains, and two cords, with which to demolish burning houses; while the bedel of the ward is furnished with a horn to rouse the neighbourhood.

Against foes from within and without we have an organised system of protection, not wholly contemptible, though in no way comparable to yours. The curfew bell ordained by the Conqueror to be rung nightly at eight o'clock, still duly sounds from the City churches; after which hour no person with arms or without a light ought to be found abroad. A regular watch is kept in each ward by the alderman and certain members of the wardmote on horseback. To prevent thieves escaping pursuit, bars and chains are placed across the streets, especially those leading to the river. The gates, as we told you yesterday, have their daily and nightly guard. On certain festivals in the summer there are goodly musters of the City watch, who, arrayed in bright armour, and carrying lighted cressets, march through the chief streets; their fellow-citizens, to do them honour, garnishing the houses with oil-lamps hung round with green boughs and flowers, the evening concluding with bonfires and open-air banquets, where all passers-by are invited to make merry.

As the house pleases you, we need not seek further. Your outlay in the matter of furniture need not be large, as our modes of life are simple. We have no "marts" as you have, but you must employ a carpenter to make each article as you want it. For the hall you will require a table, either dormant (that is, fixed) or on trestles. By the hearth you may have two or three fixed chairs, and a few benches and stools. Carpets are not in use, save at court and in great houses, but we strew the floors with dry rushes in summer, and green fodder in winter. For covering the benches, you may have osier mats or cushions. For the solar you will require some tester-beds, each consisting of a bench to support the mattress, and a canopy over the head. Mattresses you can procure of rich stuff, and elaborately quilted, if you will. Pillows, bolsters, chalouns (as we call the blankets made at Châlons in France), linen sheets, and counterpanes, can be had of equal costliness, or of more moderate quality and price. Two or three chests for clothes, some ewers and basins of earthenware, a few towels, combs, and mirrors of polished steel, will complete the furniture of the bed-chambers.

For the table you require some wooden trenchers, and plates, and bowls, either of wood or earthenware. The latter from its costliness, is not much used. The wealthy dine off silver, gilt, and enamelled dishes. Goblets can be obtained of various kinds, from gold, silver, crystal, glass, alabaster, agate, or cocoa-nut, down to pewter and wood. None are better than those which we call mazers, made out of the masere or walnut-tree. A large wooden salt-cellar is requisite for the centre of the table. Spoons are commonly made of silver for persons of the

middle class. Forks are in less frequent use, but can be purchased. It is usual to send the meat to table on a spit of silver, which is handed round to the guests, each man cutting off with his knife as much as he requires. As the fingers become soiled by this fashion of eating, we commonly have a lavatory in the hall. Knives may be purchased with silver, enamelled, or agate handles, and are generally carried about the person in plain or ornamented sheaths. Tablecloths and napkins you can procure of various qualities.

For the kitchen, all the requisite utensils, as caldrons, dishes, pots, pails, spits, and trivets, you may buy on Cornhill. Candlesticks are commonly made of iron. You will find the wax candles imported from Paris, called perchers, the best for your own use, tallow being good enough for household purposes. Soap is much imported from Spain, but some very good of a grey colour is made at Bristol. For fuel, there are various sorts in use; consisting of either charcoal, seacoal, fagots, brushwood, or fern.

As to the garden, which you should stock with the ordinary fruit-trees and vegetables, you will find the soil favourable, though somewhat moist hereabouts from the multitude of springs. Your neighbour, the Earl of Lincoln, manages to derive a considerable income from the sale of his fruits. Apples of the costard and pearmain species are common with us. Of pears we have several kinds—the Kaylewell (which you call Caillou), a stewing pear, the Rewl (or St. Règle), and the Pesse Pucelle, being the best. If you visit Bedfordshire, be sure to obtain a graft from the Cistercian monks of Warden, who have a famous baking pear, called after them. To pears you may add cherries, peaches, plums, coynes (quinces in your tongue), medlars, and mulberries. Gooseberries, strawberries, and raspberries we have in a wild state, but do not often cultivate. Chesnuts and walnuts are not unfrequently grown. Vines demand such a large space and careful culture that they would be unfit for this piece of ground. In some districts, as at Teynham and Northfleet, in Kent, manors of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and at Ledbury under Malvern, a manor of the Bishop of Hereford, they attain great richness and value. Of flowers, you should plant roses, lilies, violets, sunflowers, gillyflowers, or clove pinks, poppies, and periwinkles (your periwinkles), and enclose them, as our wont is, in a wattle fence. Of vegetables, we have cabbages, peas, beans, radishes, onions, garlic, leeks, sorrel, beet, lettuce, parsley, rape (a species of what you call turnip), rocket, mustard, and cress. Of herbs, sage, mint, fennel, hyssop, and rue are grown. If you will, you may set up a beehive, the honey wherefrom is certain of a purchaser among the brewers, who use it for their ale. Were you not a heretic, we should advise you to dig and stock a vivary with fish, which, by reason of our many Church fasts, we eat more commonly than flesh.

You will be glad of a little information touching the customs of trade amongst us, and the best shops and markets at which to purchase. Our ordinary shops, as you may see, are open chambers on the ground floor. Beneath them are in some cases sheds for warehouses; but to your repositories of stock answer our shealds (or sheds) attached to the hythes, or landing-places. There certain public officers, called scavengers, are in attendance, who take customs for the stowage of goods in these receptacles. Besides their shops our tradesmen have stalls, which in assigned places they are allowed to keep stationary. Elsewhere they stand, as you saw yesterday, in the road. Trades being generally handed down from father to son, or restricted to a guild, it is usual for all men of the same calling to inhabit a separate district. To remedy the evil effects of the monopoly that would ensue from the restriction of trades, the authorities are wont from time to time to publish an assize, or fixed scale of charges, which no trader may exceed. This rule applies to handicraftsmen as well as to dealers. No doubt a certain degree of injustice is thereby occasioned, but assuredly less than would fall upon the poorer public if the guilds were under no control. Before you blame our system you must be reminded that in your country a similar restraint is placed upon the extortion of the drivers of public conveyances.

The civic officers exercise the strictest control over the quality of food and liquors, and the weights and measures whereby they are sold. It is the duty of the alderman of each ward to inspect the latter periodically, and certify to their accuracy by affixing his seal. No private and unsealed vessels, such as the common drinking cups of the taverns, called hanaps and cruskyns, or cruises, are allowed to be used as measures. Wine cannot be sold until scrutinised and gauged. The bakers have their ovens regularly inspected, and the bread compared with the assessed standard. If any one is detected giving false weight he is pilloried in Chepe for the offence. After two convictions, his oven is pulled down, and he is expelled from the trade. The pillory is the ordinary punishment for selling unsound, imperfect, and counterfeit goods of any description, the articles themselves being not only forfeited, but burnt.

There is but one more custom of our trade which it is requisite that you should know, and that is the franchise of purveyance enjoyed by the king and certain privileged bodies and individuals. To form an adequate conception of it, you must call to mind the condition of some of your own seaport towns, where, to the prejudice of the residents, the first supply of fish is daily bought up by the metropolitan traders. Here the metropolis and the whole country are in a similar position, with the additional disadvantage of the hardship being legalised. It is usual for the servants of the king, and certain spiritual and temporal lords, to attend the markets between midnight and the

hour of prime (the Church service at six A.M.), and choose the best articles for the use of their masters. Public trading is only legal after this period. Of late years, through the manly opposition of the Commons, this drawback to our commercial prosperity has been mitigated to some extent, and its limits are always guarded with the utmost jealousy.

Of edibles let us begin with bread. There are several sorts in regular consumption. The best white bread we call "demeine," or lord's quality. The next sort is "wastel," that is, cake or biscuit bread, which, though good, is half the price of demeine. A third kind is called French; a fourth "puff," from its lightness; and a fifth "tourte," or "bis," that is, brown bread. The leaven employed is also of different qualities. The loaves, which are circular in shape, are always stamped with the baker's private seal—a counterpart of which is kept by the alderman of the ward, who makes a periodical tour of inspection. Mixed flour is often used in the country—especially a combination of wheat and rye, which we call "mystelon," or "monk-corn," from its being a favourite food in the monasteries. It is the same as the maslin of your country. To prevent fraud, this, and every other commixture of flour, is forbidden in London. For a similar reason, the bakers of tourte bread, which is made of unbolted flour, are prohibited from making any other sort, and a converse restriction extends to the bakers of white bread. The places for the sale of loaves are public, and it is illegal to purchase at the baker's oven. Cornchill and Chepe are the largest markets. Private families, however, usually buy of the regratresses, women who regrate, or retail bread from the bakers, and deliver it at the doors of their customers. The profit of these hucksters is limited to the thirteenth batch, which they receive over and above each dozen. You, too, are familiar with the term "baker's dozen." The bread most in demand with us is not made in the City, but at Stratford, and Bremble in Essex, and St. Alban's in Hertfordshire, whence it is brought up in carts every morning. The reason of its popularity is its cheapness—two ounces over London weight being gained in every penny-worth.

Should you have occasion to buy corn, you will find the regular markets at Billingsgate, Queenhythe, Grasechirke, and the Friars Minors' pavement at Newgate. To prevent any chance of the collision of eager competitors, certain places are assigned to farmers from the eastern, and those from the western counties; and to prevent fraud, restrictions of time and place are put upon regraters. There are millers in the City, should you require their services. The few sokes still remaining confer upon the owners a right of multure; that is, the exclusive privilege of grinding the corn of their tenants.

We Londoners eat less flesh than fish, and pork more than other kinds of meat, but you will find ample means of gratifying your own

taste in this respect. West Smithfield is our largest cattle market, but for meat you must go to St. Nicholas flesh-shambles by Newgate, or to the Stokkes market near the Poultry. Beef, mutton, veal, pork, and venison, may there be had. If you are a sportsman at home, you will be horrified to hear that we eat the latter as often salted as fresh, and pay so little regard to season as to kill all the year round, save only in the fence-month, or fawning-time, which lasts from fifteen days before to fifteen days after Midsummer.

Of poultry and game you will find in our markets nearly all the kinds prized in your country—turkeys being the chief exception. We eat also several kinds that you either have not, or do not value—such as peacocks, esteemed with us a royal delicacy, swans, cranes, herons, curlews, bitterns, thrushes, and finches. So with fish. We think delicious several species which you despise—such as whale, sturgeon, porpoise, grampus, sea-calf, sea-wolf (or dog-fish as you call it), and conger—while we care very little for your favourite lobsters, crabs, and shrimps. The chief landing-places for fish are Queenhythe and Billingsgate, and its regular markets the Stokkes, Old and New Fish Streets. From Prussia we import stock-fish, the sale of which is a special trade. Scotland sends us salmon and cured cod. There are several regulations of the fish trade, with which it would be very tedious to acquaint you. One of them only may be mentioned, as being for the benefit of the poor; prohibiting whelks, mussels, and such common fish from being regrated, so that the price may not be heightened by a double profit.

Of minor articles of food you can obtain all you want at the various markets. Butter we hold in slight esteem. It is more thin and watery than that which is made in your country, so much so that we sell it by liquid measure. Cheese is made in the country, but also largely imported by the French and Hanse merchants. That of Brie is as great a favourite with us as with you. The French merchants of Amiens, Corby, and Nesle, also bring us onions and garlic. You can obtain here most of the common groceries and spices to which you are accustomed: sugar (which we import from Alexandria and Sicily), pepper, ginger, cannell (your cinnamon), caraway, liquorice, mastic, cubebs, cardamums, anise, rice, cloves, mace, muscads (as we call your nutmegs), and olive oil. Salt we obtain from the Cinque Ports chiefly. Besides native fruits, you may purchase the following imports: figs, almonds, dates, raisins, currants, prunes, damascenes (damsons in your tongue), and occasionally oranges, and pomegranates.

Wine is the ordinary drink of the middle classes with us, and is imported in large quantities from France, Spain, Italy, and Greece. The sale of sweet wine is a special trade, and there are only three taverns in the City where it is allowed to be sold. Of this sort, Malvesie, a Greek wine (your Malmsey), and Claire, a French wine boiled and sweetened, are chiefly

in demand. Of wines without sweetness, the white wine of Gascony, the red of Bordeaux, Lepe (made in the neighbourhood of Cadiz), and Rhenish, are much drunk. You will recognise the ordinary wine tavern by a pole which projects from the gable, and has a bush or bunch of leaves at its extremity. Ale is sold at separate taverns. It is made from either barley, wheat, or oats. Though a favourite beverage with us, it may not be to your taste, on account of its sweetness and heat. Instead of hops our brewers mingle honey, pepper, and spices with the malt liquor. As, unlike you, we prefer new ale to old, it is usual for the customer to send his vessel to the brewery at night and call for it in the morning, that the ale may have time to work. Cider is made from pear-main apples, in Yorkshire, Norfolk, and other counties; mead is a common drink in the Welsh marches; but neither is much known in London.

We must add a few general words respecting the coinage current amongst us, and the average prices at which the commodities we have mentioned are sold. In theory, our monetary system is the same as your own, the pound being divided into twenty shilling parts, of twelve penny-weights each. In practice, we differ widely, as our money is thrice as heavy as yours; we have no coins answering to your pound and shilling, and no copper coinage at all. With us, the pound is of twelve ounces of silver, and equal to three pounds of your money. We reckon not only by pounds, shillings, and pence, but by the mark. No such coin is now in circulation, but its representative value is thirteen shillings and fourpence, or two pounds of your money. Our highest gold coin is the half-mark or noble. There are also half and quarter nobles of gold. Besides these, we have the gold florin, so called from its Florentine coiners, worth about six shillings (between eighteen and nineteen shillings of your money); the half and the quarter florin. These pieces, not being thought convenient, are being withdrawn from circulation. The Royal Mint, in the Tower, has also issued of late years a large silver piece, called, from its size, a groat (gros), and legally worth fourpence; but not being equal in weight to four pennies sterling, the price of commodities sold by it has been generally raised. The word sterling we derive from the Easterlings, or East German traders, whose money has always been noted for its special fineness. The silver penny is now about eighteen grains in weight. We have also the halfpenny, and quarter, or farthing. Pieces to that value are now generally coined, but the broken halves and quarters of pennies were not long since in common use. Certain foreign coins still circulate amongst us. The bezant of Constantinople is no longer to be found, but the French florin of three shillings and fourpence, the crown of six shillings and eightpence, which, from the shield on its face, is called a "schelde," and the piece of five shillings, termed, from the Agnus Dei upon it, a "mouton," are legally current. The Genoese coins known as Jane, or

Galley halfpence, and the money of the Counts of Luxembourg, which we call Lussheburgs, are not held to belong to our currency. The utterance of several spurious coins, as crocards, polards, rosaries, staldings, cocodones, eagles, leonines, mitres, steepings, and black mail, is prohibited by express statutes.

The values of ordinary articles of commerce vary greatly within short periods of time, and you must be guided by the Assize—generally an equitable estimate—which is periodically published for every trade. You will find, as a rule, that owing to the difference between our country and yours with respect to the importation of bullion, and the supply of commodities, the command over the latter represented by our money is fifteen, if not twenty, times as great as that which you can obtain. Wheat fluctuates extremely in price, a few years ago having reached twenty shillings per quarter (of eight bushels); whereas now it is cheap, and will not fetch more than four or five shillings per quarter in the country, and five or six shillings in London. Its average price is held to be six shillings and eightpence per quarter. Bread, at the present price of wheat, is sold at the rate of a halfpenny for a two-pound loaf. A fat ox may fetch from twelve to sixteen shillings—a fat sheep about eightpence—a hen twopence—eggs a penny a score. Fish is sold in various ways, according to its kind. If in large quantities, it may be bought by the basket, each to contain as much as a bushel of oats. Nothing varies more in price, as every one knows. Salmon, from Christmas to Easter, costs half as much again as after Easter. Mackerel doubles its price in Lent, when it is much eaten. Oysters are sold by the gallon, twopence being a fair price; eels by the strike of twenty-five, at the same cost; pickled herrings by the score, for one penny.

Spices and groceries we, like you, sell by the pound. Sugar may cost from a shilling to two shillings per pound, rice three halfpence to twopence, almonds twopence halfpenny to threepence halfpenny, pepper eightpence to a shilling. Cloves and saffron, though much used for flavouring wine and meats, are high-priced, costing sometimes as much as ten shillings a pound. Apples sell at a shilling a hundred; pears, according to the sort, from threepence to three shillings a hundred; coynes (quinces), fourpence a hundred.

The average price of Malvesie wine is about sixteenpence per gallon (of four quarts); of Rhenish, eightpence. The sextary, by which wine is also sold, contains four gallons. The pottle, which is a common measure, holds two quarts. Ale is generally assessed at a penny to three halfpence per gallon for the best, and at three farthings to a penny for the second quality. The fluctuations of the Assize, as respects all these articles, are of course owing to a variety of causes, of which war and weather are the most influential. To fully understand their operation, you must know the condition of our agriculture and the extent of our commerce.

For the present you have probably had as much information as you will be able to digest at one time.

A ROMAN SOLDIER.

I SHOULD say—whatever significance lies below the fact—that an Eternal city must be the very happy hunting-grounds of the guild of bill-stickers. They are the free lances of their profession. No scowling “Post no bills” or “Défense d’afficher” warns them off jealously kept premises; no niggard proprietor shall extend the provisions of the game laws to his tenements and hereditaments, and strictly “preserve” a tempting bit of wall or virgin corner. They roam hither and thither wheresoever they list, and coming to a likely angle (they have a nice eye, and a taste almost artistic in these matters) or a piece of unsullied brickwork enjoying a suitable publicity, the artist of the beautiful sets up his scaling ladder, and spreading his adhesive mixture, affixes his little proclamations deftly. I am sorry to see that he affects no distinction between premises sacred and profane, decorating the walls alike of church and palace with the strictest impartiality. With a little attention to the choice of subject, there might be a certain discrimination in the distribution of the notices, for it does not harmonise with the fitness of things that lost dogs should be proclaimed from beside the church door, though it may be whispered that invitations for lost sheep to return might suit such a situation with more appropriateness. It must be said, however, that they are shut out from the usufruct of scaffoldings, hoardings, and such enclosures, and are thus thrown back upon more solid surfaces; but it must be said also, that this is to be placed to the account of the well-known impediment which once interfered with the discharge of a certain famous salute. Hoarding—at least not of this harmless timber nature—is unfamiliar to Roman street economy.

However this may be, the labours of these gentlemen seem to be altogether absorbed in the promulgation of controversial matter. There seems, at this crisis, to have fallen a perfect shower of pamphlet hail; dead walls are galvanised into a certain liveliness and theological briskness. I come to-day by this palace corner and find it overlaid with a myriad of these proclamations, all glistening in their new print and shining paste. Stolid faces collect and read, and a black-robed priest with a hat broad and flat as an Indian bowl, leans on his ancient green umbrella, and reads thoughtfully. I see one take out his book and pencil and make a note of the price and address, then go his way briskly. There is surely a “mort” of titles to pick from, and the most fastidious taste can satisfy itself. There is “Il Papa,” “Il Rè e l’Italia,” besides which shines out in broad black letters “Il sovrantà temporale del Papa.” Not far off is “Lo spirituale e il temporale nella Chiesa,” and a little to the right, in suggestive proximity, is “La Francia, l’Impero, et il

Papato." Vast and comprehensive subjects which would seem to exhaust these nice questions, and each offered at the humble figure of twopence-halfpenny! I come next day by this familiar corner, and find that the wall is still there, but the papers are gone; at least they are hidden away under a fresh company of clean glistening sheets, displaying an entirely novel and appetising (for such as love the aliment) titles. Now I read it "Il Congresso e il Papa" (this poor name is sadly buffeted in the dust of the conflict), and M. Villemain's brochure done out of his heavy French into heavier Italian. A distinguished nobleman belonging to our country, I see, has been glorified by a similar compliment: and "Debate in the English Parliament di Milor Normanby," swells the crowded rack of these lighter squibs. As each day succeeds, so does a fresh shower come fluttering down from the clouds; and as each day closes, so is it absorbed into that waste-paper limbo reserved for pamphlets, and newspapers, and playbills. Doctors of law, canons, lawyers, prelates, all descend into the arena and ignite their little squibs. Populus rushes and buys with avidity, and has the whole niceties of that intricate question expounded for the small charge of five halfpennies.

Wandering up and down through these Roman thoroughfares, in which there is inexhaustible entertainment, I hail a decently stocked shop with a certain thankfulness. It is a species of spring in the desert, even though it be but a poor tenth-class article, stuck with indifferent little table ornaments of the Palais Royal make, only sadly dimmed and of the pattern the season before last. In such a miscellany there are not many things likely to make you start, yet when I see three little yellow busts in a line looking at me steadfastly from the window of one emporium, I do own to such an emotion. There is nothing in the fact of three yellow busts in a line looking out of a window, but when the centre one proves to be an exact portrait of his Holiness Pius the Ninth, and the one on the right his excommunicated Majesty Victor Emmanuel, and the one on the left the eldest but sadly undutiful son of the Church, Napoleon the Third, the combination becomes suggestive and most significant. I pass and re-pass the same establishment pretty often, and always find the Holy Father supported by this Royal Peachum and Lockit. I wonder is this exposition a mere stupidity on the part of the innocent proprietor, or a bit of sly satire fitted to the crisis? More surprising still, where are the Argus-eyed? where Manteucci, chief of the thief-takers, to forbid this unlawful collocation?

It was thought that when the late Signor Lablache passed away, Doctor Dulcamara, with his elixirs, nostrums, and carriage, retired from business. I am very glad to see that this is not the case. For, coming round by that space in front of the Pantheon, whose dark pillars look as though they had been smoked black by fire, I come upon Doctor Dulcamara, aloft upon his quaint machine, half carriage, half caravan, and,

by his lusty voice, full of strength and spirits. Neither have the gaping rusties retired from business, for here they are gathered, open-mouthed, greedy, stolid, and purchasing briskly. The doctor wears his bright charlatan's robes of office, and is assisted by a theatrical-looking young lady, who *may* be his daughter, but may more reasonably be presumed to be his slave, for I should take the doctor to be Eastern in his tastes and habits. I draw near, and am delighted with his harangue. It is irresistible. His little bottles go off like wildfire. I draw near and hear him say: "Friends! Signori and Signore! Might I not have been rich, powerful, flourishing, at this moment, great in the courts and in the palaces? but I scorned them all!" (Orator flings back his arm with much heat and violence.) "I preferred—ay, ten thousand times preferred" (orator now crouching low like a cat, and running on hurriedly in a low guttural and mysterious tone)—"the gratification of alleviating the sorrows of my fellow-creatures, soothing their woes, bearing health, life, and consolation to the sick-bed of the poor and suffering!" (Climax is emphasised by a tremendous thump on his breast, and a burst of applause encourages the production of such noble sentiments. Wiping his brow, orator proceeds.) "Has not" (this is spoken very slowly and impressively)—"*non ha il impero di le Francesi*" (pause)—"*di tutti le Francesi*" (protracted pause, while rustic visages lengthen visibly at the awful name), "did he not offer with his *own* hand—*colla sua mano*" (pause, rusties breathless), "offer to pin on my *own* breast le *magnificente decorazione* of the *Legion of Honour*? Did not the Empress of the Russias—of *all* the Russias? did not the Grand Seignior the Sultan—" (I do not catch the magnificent offers made by those august persons.) "Ecco! Behold! See! Look on the precious papers!" (And he drags from his breast a bundle of greasy parchments with seals dangling from them.) "*Ma non! Never! never! never!*" (This is spoken with the vehemence of virtue and self-abnegation. The parchments are flung back contemptuously into an omnibus.) "I have it *here*" (thumping his breast violently) "what repays me for all!" And as I walk away, I see that the young lady assistant can scarcely meet the demand for the efficacious bottles.

This little alley takes me away from Doctor Dulcamara, round by the soot-coloured Pantheon, which some way fits into its place as familiarly and as practically as does the Bank of England or the General Post Office, and leads me up to the great hostelry, which is, sub tutela—under the protection—of the Goddess of Wisdom, and is christened Minerva. From Pantheon to Minerva is not so outrageous a leap; but it is hard to fathom what special affinity binds that wise divinity to hotel-keeping. Had she, indeed, sprung armed from the stomach, not the brain, of Jupiter—but it is not so written. Unexplained, too, the mysterious law that seems to draw under its roof, clergymen of all climes and countries, but of one denomina-

tion. It overflows with the sacerdotal element, and in case of extremity you would be only embarrassed with redundancy of spiritual aid. I know also the significance of the two lean sentries at the gate, who, by their lean faces and coarse grey coats, of the prison or workhouse colour, hanging on them in bags, and garnished with pewter buttons, unconsciously resuscitate the lanky soldier who staggered under a famous chine of beef at Mr. William Hogarth's Calais Gate. The potentate they do honour to, has been whispered of for weeks back, and has now but newly come. He is at the sign of Pallas Athene and her wise bird. Rustics stand about and eye the lean sentries curiously. Do they remark (as I do, and it is a very painful eyesore) that the pewter buttons of this left-hand sentry are buttoned all awry; or are they speculating upon this carriage now driving up, with the four gentlemen in the French hats inside, and whom lean sentries (buttoned awry) salute noisily? Crowd hurries up in an instant. He—that short dark man—of the true French colonel stamp, who springs out so light, is the general, the fighting Algerian and famous Legitimist warrior. He sits in his chamber on that first floor, with orderlies waiting in the lobby. He has changed the face of the hotel sacerdotal. He has made the goddess furbish up her old armour. Staff officers come and go. Later I see one: tall, handsome, of good figure, his military frock fitting him without a wrinkle (it was cut out by no Roman tailor), mounting his charger in the court. He looks an earnest soldier, and has seen fighting; but I am more struck by a mournful preoccupied look in his eyes, that seems to speak of a sad fixity of purpose. I meet him, now descending the stairs with a broad despatch in his hand, now clattering down some narrow street with a mounted dragoon behind him. But the same stern, sad fire looks out from his eyes, as he thinks that perhaps another orderly, in the shape of Atræa Cura, is riding unseen beside. When some one tells me that this is Colonel Pimodan, chief of the staff to General Lamoricière, it much helps me, and the name passes me by lightly; but now the name recurs to me with events of yesterday, with a suspicion that some presage or presentiment was working under those handsome features.

It seemed an odd conception that fixity of head-quarters at an hostelry, and setting up the Horse Guards at the sign of the Dragon. But they do fierce battle at dinner-time, and are terrible customers these gentlemen of the staff. I see them at the daily banquet, sitting, many together, and victualling on the old anticipating system so admirably inculcated by the late Major Daigetty. There is the old French officer, whose jaws seem to me to work as by some artificial mechanical agency, whose performance is something fearful to look at, and who—though he at different occasions has lost out of his person various teeth, muscles, tendons, and important bones—still has apparently suffered in no respect in the matter of relish

and appetite. It is a marvel to see that ancient officer chopping and munching his food.

Not many days since, wandering into the spacious Piazza of Saint Peter's, I found the fruits of this hostelry Horse Guards already in full work and vigour. That superb approach has become a training-ground, and is dotted over with parties of the lank, lean, Calais Gate soldiery, at drill. Such poor stuff, such insufficient food for powder! O great miscellany of the pewter-buttoned and cold workhouse-toned grey! you must first fill in those bags and wrinkles with good solid meat, before the Algerine can make much of you! They seem to me of the same texture and quality as that notable leg of mutton which Dr. Johnson once partook of, when coaching it up or down for Lichfield, and which he vehemently stigmatised as "ill kept, ill dressed, ill cooked, and as bad as bad could be." The practice was, I suppose, no worse and no more awkward than elemental drilling all the world over. There were the stiff hands galvanised (palms forward) to the sides of the human figure; the strained neck, and the goggling eyes with the alarming stare. They were at their goose-step, poor boys, and reflected the gait of that familiar bird very faithfully. It is curious, certainly, to see an officer playing drill-sergeant, and stepping backwards in front of that doubtful, hesitating line, which now reels into a concave arc, now wriggles into a perfect snake. Officer may shout hoarsely and take measurements with that steel instrument of his, but I suspect it will be long before he shall work up these raw recruits into good fighting fabric. If Santo Padre would but come to that high window yonder, and look down upon these combative children of his! It would not be encouraging.

Writing in the banquetting-chamber of our hostelry, seated on a sort of steep sliding bank popularly known as a sofa, I hear the braying of military music below in the street, and fly to the balcony. I see a whole regiment of blue-and-gold men-at-arms defiling under the windows—privates, officers, drummers even—all faced and smeared plentifully with gold-lace. The Palatine Guard, or Loyal Pontifical Volunteers, all the tailors, batters, and other artificers, who have embodied themselves into this flashy corps. In return for such devotion, the state must, at its own charges, find them the showiest uniform that can be got for money. But what rivets my whole attention is the mounted officer who rides in front: a youth of not more than three or four-and-twenty: the most corpulent, plethoric, florid youth my eye has ever rested on. They have their music, too, which works obstreperously. I see that, after office and shop hours, they delight in showing themselves and their gaudy clothes at public ceremonies, where they are treated obsequiously; and I find the *Giornale di Roma* repeatedly complimenting them on their attendance, in some such form as, "We observed among the crowd several of the new Palatine Guard in *full regimentals*, who have

eagerly seized this opportunity of testifying," &c. &c.

Peace be with these worthy fencibles! There was some such civic guard once seen on duty muffled in great-coats, and sheltering themselves under umbrellas. A languid Neapolitan, sunning himself on the shore of his own bright bay, has been heard to excuse himself from fighting, with this irresistible argument: "What would you have? Life is very sweet—we don't want to die!" It is not difficult to read in the eyes of these creatures, so diligent at their goose-step, future decampment into the open country and desertion of their general at the first shot.

As I lounge down the long Corso in the cool afternoon, I hear slow steady tramping behind, with spur music chinking in proper time; and, looking back, I see a different quality of fighting men. A patrol party of pontifical men-at-arms coming their rounds, eight or ten strong, and two abreast—strong broad-chested men, of fine figure and proportions, and stepping with a slow, ponderous dignity. In dress they are the gendarmes of the stage, who arrest Robert Macaire, with the familiar white cord epaulettes, and cross-belts, and cocked-hats. Walk up the street some hundred feet higher, and there meets them another party, just as strong, sauntering by in solemn dead march. These are ticklish days: a spark may at any moment fall upon the republican tinder and blow all up. Towards midnight, when you have passed the band of youths arm-in-arm, fresh from the pit of the Opera, and chanting the favourite tenor air in their own tenor voices, you hear the measured tread of the patrol draw near, and the company of shadowy figures, now draped in long pyramidal cloaks that sweep the ground, pass by sadly, and are gone into the night. Very peaceful are Roman streets at such hours. Even the sleeping dogs take their rest in prodigious numbers, stretched on the open pathway. It is almost comical to see the long bodies of these laid out so boldly, secure of not being disturbed; for a gentle toleration for the four-footed is one of the redeeming points in the Roman commonwealth. Of a Sunday morning I have seen a whole congregation stepping aside respectfully into the road to avoid inconveniencing a great yellow hound snoring in the sun on the pathway. Nothing could be more tenderly gracious than the manner in which this act of courtesy was paid, or more delicious than the conscious security with which the drowsy brute held his place, blinking luxuriously.

As I look at Roman Pincher snoozing thus of the Sunday morning, he brings to my mind a legend—a dog legend—growing out of the humours of the Roman fair. An Irish friend is returning home cheerfully—when it is pretty far gone in the small hours—from that famous ball at the Princess Piccinino's, and, meeting on his progress, many dogs of various sizes and breeds, begins regaling them with bits of biscuit and other delicacies. To his surprise, on turning round a corner, he finds himself waited on by a

whole procession—a sort of dense company of irregular light dogs, the spahis of the tribe. All are expectant, and follow his motions wistfully; reckoning on entertainment. My Irish friend bethinks him what to do with this miscellany, and suddenly determines to get as much comedy out of the situation as possible. He sets off again, making for the house of a friend whom he loves not too well, and the irregulars, now swelled by numerous volunteers, follow closely. Knocking loudly, he is presently admitted. "Signor is asleep, just come from the ball." "No matter—business of importance—news from England—go and wake." Porter goes up. Irish friend then enters, and flings biscuit up-stairs. Enters loudly, and with savage contention, whole troop of irregulars, hurrying pell-mell up-stairs. Comic friend then shuts the door, and goes his way.

UNDER THE SNOW.

IN TWO PORTIONS. PORTION THE FIRST.

ALTHOUGH Switzerland is famous, all the world over, for its lofty mountains, still, in foreign countries, many lads of my age, and in my station of life, may not exactly know that the Jura is a chain of mountains formed by several parallel chains which extend from Basle, in Switzerland, quite up to France and a little way into it, running in the direction from north-east to south-west. The length of the Jura is about one hundred and seventy miles, and its breadth from thirty-five to forty miles. It contains a great number of deep valleys, and several mountains whose summits are very lofty.

I mention these dry details at the outset, in order that you may better understand what happened to me; for it is, in great measure, the difference of the height of the mountains which renders them more or less habitable. The higher they are, the sharper is the cold there, the shorter is the summer, the scantier is the vegetation, and the earlier does the snow cover it. Some of these mountains are even so lofty that the snow on their tops is never entirely and completely melted, but remains in patches in the hollows. Nevertheless, all the mountains of the Jura lose their upper garment of snow every year; some sort of herbage springs on the highest summits; at many points they are clothed with magnificent woods of beech, oak, and especially firs; whilst other parts afford excellent pasture-ground, on which very fine cattle are reared, and particularly oxen, cows, and goats. Notwithstanding which, these beautiful mountains are scarcely habitable more than five months in the year, from May or June until the beginning of October.

As soon as the snows are melted and the summits are clothed again with green, our villages, which are all built in the valleys or on the lower slopes, send their herds up the mountain. This departure is quite a holiday; and yet we herdsmen have to spend the whole summer away from our families, leading a hard-working life with many privations. We live almost entirely

on a milk-and-cheese diet, which we call by a general name, *laitage*, having often nothing else to drink by way of a change but water from the spring. We spend our time in grazing our herds and in making those large and handsome cheeses which are known as Gruyère.

Every herdsman has, up in the mountain, a *châlet*, which is a wretched place for human habitation, although mostly built of stone. It is roofed with small deal planks called *bardeaux*; heavy stones, laid in rows upon them, press them down, and prevent the storms from stripping them off. The interior of a *châlet* is divided into three apartments; a well-closed stable or cow-house, to lodge the cattle at night; a narrow and cool dairy, where the milk is kept in broad wooden bowls; and a kitchen, which also serves as a bedroom, where the herdsman not unfrequently sleeps on a bed of straw. The kitchen is furnished with a vast chimney, in which hangs an enormous caldron, for warming the milk and helping to convert it into cheese. As the *châlet* is our residence the whole summer long, we are obliged to store it with many little articles of necessity, to save having to go down to the valley to fetch them when wanted unexpectedly.

Our season hardly finishes before St. Denis's-day, the 9th of October. We then quit the mountain, again making a holiday, delighted to return to our families. But we do not lead an idle life in the village, any more than we did at the *châlet*. We are accustomed to depend upon ourselves, and are obliged to turn our hands to everything. We make household utensils, tools, and furniture; we carve wood into fancy articles, which are afterwards dispersed all over Europe. But, what is of the greatest importance, the winter allows us spare time for our education. If the path to the school is not always open, the children are made to learn their lessons at home. The art of writing is not forgotten; and by reading aloud, we amuse and instruct others as well as ourselves. It was a good thing for me that I was so brought up. If I had not had these resources in my trouble, I know not what would have become of me. One thing at least is clear: the journal which follows could not have existed. Although only a Swiss country-lad, I have been able to write some sort of a history. Here it is, as I was able to note it down from day to day.

November 22.—Since it is the will of God that I and my grandfather should be imprisoned in this *châlet*, I intend to record in writing what happened to us. If we are destined to perish here, our relations and friends will learn how our last days were spent; if we are delivered, this journal will preserve the recollection of our dangers and our sufferings. It is also my grandfather's wish that I should undertake it.

The day before yesterday, in the village, we had been expecting my father for several weeks past. St. Denis's-day was over; all the herds had come down from the mountain together with their keepers. My father alone failed to make his appearance, and we began to ask,

"What can possibly detain him?" I lost my mother three years ago; but my uncles and aunts assured me that I need not make myself uneasy; that probably there remained some grass to be eaten, and that was why my father kept the herd a little later up the mountain.

At last my grandfather became alarmed. He said, "I will go myself and see why François does not come. I shall not be sorry to see the *châlet* once more. Who knows whether I shall be able to visit it next summer? Will you like to come with me?"

It was the very request I was going to make; for, as I have no mother, we are almost always together. We were soon ready to start. We mounted slowly, sometimes following narrow gorges, sometimes skirting the brink of deep precipices. About a quarter of a league before we came to the *châlet*, I was attracted by curiosity to the edge of a very steep rock. My grandfather, who had told me more than once that he did not like my doing so, hastened forward to pull me back; but a large stone, rolling backwards as he stepped upon it, caused him to sprain his foot, and put him to considerable pain. But in a few minutes he felt better, and we hoped that no bad consequences would ensue. With the help of his stout holly stick, and by leaning on my shoulder, he was able to drag himself as far as this place.

My father was greatly surprised to see us. He was busy preparing for his departure; so that if we had quietly waited at home one day longer, his arrival would have put an end to our uneasiness. That very same evening, Pierre was to set off with the remainder of the cheeses.

After a short repose, my grandfather asked me, "Are you very tired, Louis?" The manner in which he made the inquiry seemed to betray some secret intention, and I did not give a very decided answer. "I was thinking," he added, "that it might be prudent to send on the boy with Pierre. The wind has changed during the last half-hour, and may perhaps bring us bad weather in the course of the night."

My father expressed the same fear, and urged me to follow that counsel.

"I had much rather wait for you," I said. "Grandfather, with his lame foot, stands in great need of a good night's rest."

There hung over the fire a boiler which I regarded with greedy eyes. My father understood the signal, and served us some soup made of maize-flour and milk, which we ate, like soldiers, all out of one bowl. It was agreed that we should all go down together next day, which was yesterday. After which, I went to bed and fell asleep, without paying much attention to what was said by my father and grandfather, who had a long conversation in an under tone after their supper.

Next morning I was quite surprised to see the mountain all covered with white. The snow was still falling with unusual heaviness, being driven by a violent wind. I should have been highly amused, had I not remarked my relations' anxiety. I was very uneasy myself, when I saw

my grandfather try to take a few steps, and drag himself along with great difficulty, supporting himself by the furniture and against the wall. The accident of the day before had caused his foot to swell, and made it very painful.

"Go," he said. "Lead away the child, before the snow is deeper. You see it is impossible for me to accompany you."

"But do you suppose, father, I can abandon you in that way?"

We spent a good portion of the day without coming to a decision. We had still hopes that assistance would be sent to us from the village. I said that I was big enough to do without a guide, and to help my father to drive the herd. My representations were of no use; my grandfather persisted in his resolution. He would not expose us to danger, by becoming a burden on us.

My father insisted, almost angrily. I wept while I witnessed the painful altercation. At last I contrived to put an end to it, by saying, "Leave me also in the chalet; you will reach home all the sooner. You will come back with sufficient help to fetch us. Grandfather will have somebody to wait upon him and keep him company. We shall take care of one another, and Providence will take care of us both."

"The boy is right," my grandfather said. "The snow is already so deep, and the storm so violent, that I apprehend more danger from his following you than from his staying with me. Here, François, take my stick, it is a strong one and pointed with iron. It will help you down the mountain, as it helped me up. Let the cows out of the stable; leave us the goat and all the provisions which remain. I am more anxious about you than I am about myself."

When my father was on the point of starting, I gave him a handsome flask covered with fine wicker-work, which was a present from my mother, the first time I came up to the chalet. It contained wine which I had provided for my grandfather the day before. He pressed me in his arms.

We drove out the herd, which appeared much surprised to find the earth covered with snow. Some of the cows seemed at a loss to find their way, and kept running in circles round the chalet. At last they congregated in a body, and set off in the right direction. At a very few paces' distance, both my father and the herd disappeared, being lost to sight in the whirls of snow. When we saw them no longer, my grandfather appeared to follow them with his eyes. He leaned in silence against the window, but his lips appeared to be articulating words; his hands were clasped and his eyes raised to heaven.

We were roused from serious thoughts by the increasing violence of the wind. We were wrapped round by a curtain of thick black clouds, and nightfall came almost suddenly. Nevertheless, our wooden clock had only just struck three. We had been so anxious all day long, that we had never thought of taking food, and I was dying of hunger. At that moment, I made grandfather listen how the goat was bleating.

"Poor Blanchette!" he said. "She wants to be relieved of her milk. She is calling us to come and do it. Light the lamp; we will go and milk her, and then we will sup."

The wind roared loudly; it forced its way under the bardeaux of the roof, making them rattle; you would have fancied the whole roof was going to be carried away.

"Don't be alarmed," my grandfather said. "This house has resisted many a like attack. The bardeaux are laden with very heavy stones, and the roof, with its slight inclination, gives very little hold to the wind."

When the goat saw us she redoubled her bleatings; she seemed as if she would break her rope to get at us. How greedily she licked the few grains of salt which I offered in my hand. She gave us a large pot of milk. I stood in need of it. My grandfather said, as we returned to the kitchen, "We must take good care not to forget Blanchette; we must feed her well, and milk her punctually morning and evening. Our life depends on hers."

After supper, we sat down by the fire; but the flakes of snow which fell down the chimney almost extinguished it. A cold draught of air also descended, and we could only keep ourselves warm by going to bed, after commending ourselves, by prayer, to the Lord's protection.

This morning, on waking, I found myself in complete darkness, and at first supposed that sleep had left me earlier than usual; but hearing my grandfather groping his way about the room, I rubbed my eyes, and saw none the clearer for that. The snow had blocked up the window.

"The window is low," the old man remarked. "Besides, it is probable that the snow has been drifted into a heap on that particular spot; perhaps we should not find it more than a couple of feet deep a few paces from the wall."

"In that case, they will come and help us out?"

"I hope so; but, supposing that we are to be detained here for any length of time, we must see what resources we have; when we have done that, we will consider how we can best employ them. The day has dawned, there can be no doubt; for the hour-hand of the wooden clock points to seven. It is fortunate I did not forget to wind it up last night. We must always be punctual with Blanchette."

November 23.—Yesterday morning, when we discovered that we were more close prisoners than we were the day before, we were very much depressed and saddened; nevertheless, we did not forget our breakfast and the goat. Whilst grandfather was milking her, I watched him closely, with great attention. He noticed it, and advised me to try and learn to milk, in order to replace him, in case of need. I made an attempt, which was clumsy and unsuccessful at first, especially as Blanchette kept wincing and shifting her ground, as if aware of my inexperience; but I improved greatly after three or four trials.

When we had taken stock of our provisions

and utensils, we wished to know what sort of weather it was out of doors. I went under the chimney and looked up through the only outlet which remained open in the chalet. In a few minutes, the sun suddenly shone upon the snow which rose around the opening to a considerable height. I pointed out the circumstance to my grandfather. We could exactly distinguish the thickness of the layer of snow, because the chimney does not rise outside above the roof. In fact, there is simply a hole in the roof, the outside chimney having been blown down in a storm.

"If we had a ladder," my grandfather said, "you might get up and disengage a trap which your father lately fixed on the top of the chimney, to keep out cold and wet, until the outer chimney is repaired."

"Never mind the ladder," I replied. "I saw in the stable a long fir-pole, and that is all I want. I have often climbed up trees no thicker than that, and the pole has still its bark on, which makes it easier to mount."

I set to work, tying a string to my waistband, to haul up a shovel after I got to the top. I managed so well with feet and hands, and by pressing against the walls of the chimney as the Savoyards do, that I reached the roof. With the shovel, I cleared away an open space, and found that there was about three feet of snow on the roof. Around the chalet it appeared to me that there was a great deal more. In fact, the wind had swept it up into a heap; nevertheless, there must have fallen an enormous mass of snow in a very short space of time. Everything round about the chalet is hidden under a thick white carpet; the forest of fir-trees, which surrounds it in the direction of the valley, and which shuts in the prospect, is white like the rest, with the exception of the trunks, which appear all black. Many trees are crushed by the weight; I saw large branches, and even stems, that were broken into fragments. At that moment, there blew a strong and bitter cold wind from the north; the dark clouds which it drove before it opened at intervals. Gleams of sunshine flashed through the openings, and ran over the field of snow with the swiftness of an arrow.

The cold began to lay hold of me. When I tried to describe to my grandfather what I saw, he heard that my teeth chattered. He told me to make haste and clear the trap, and as far as I could reach around the aperture of the chimney. It took some time, and was hard work; but it warmed me. Following my grandfather's directions, I passed the string I had brought through a pulley, in such a way that, by pulling from below, the trap would open, while its own weight would cause it to shut. When we had rehearsed this little manœuvre two or three times, to see that it worked properly, I descended more easily than I had mounted.

My clothes were all wet, and I had no others to put on. We lighted a bright fire of twigs and fir-cones; and then, lowering the trap and leaving no more than the necessary space for

the smoke to escape, we spent the greater part of the day by the chimney-corner, with no other light than that from the hearth; for our stock of oil was very small, and we clearly saw that we must not expect to quit our prison so soon. We did not light our lamp till it was time to milk the goat.

We find it a very unaccustomed and melancholy life, to have to drag through a whole day in this dull manner. Still I think that the hours would be less wearisome, if we were not living in a constant state of expectation. It always seems as if some one were on the point of coming to rescue us. I mounted a second time upon the roof to look whether anybody had arrived; I incessantly questioned grandpapa. He is in hopes, he says, that my father reached home safely; but perhaps the roads are completely choked by the drifted snow.

At last, after completely closing the chimney by means of the trap, we went to bed, hoping that somebody might come to our assistance to-day; but this morning we find that, for the present, the thing is almost impossible. As far as we can observe, it must have snowed all night. We had considerable difficulty in opening the trap to light our fire; I found two feet of fresh snow.

November 25.—The snow continues to fall abundantly. I have again had great difficulty in raising the trap. We think it prudent to clear the roof of a portion of the snow with which it is laden. It employed a great part of the day. I leave under my feet a layer of snow sufficiently thick to keep out the cold, and I throw off the rest.

It is some amusement to escape out of my dungeon for a little while; and yet, what I do see is very sad. The inequalities of the ground around us are scarcely distinguishable; the whole landscape is most forlorn. The earth is white, the sky is black. I have read at school the narratives of voyages in the Icy Sea and the Polar regions; I fancy we must be transported there. But since those wretched travellers, who suffered so much from cold and incurred such great dangers, have sometimes returned to their native land, I hope that we also shall see my father and our village again.

We are not deprived of *every* comfort in our sequestered habitation. We have found more hay and straw than Blanchette would consume in a whole twelvemonth for food and bedding. If she continues to yield us milk, we have in her a valuable resource. But an accident might deprive us of her; and we were very glad to find, in a corner of the stable, a small stock of potatoes. We have begun to cover them with straw, to protect them from the frost. My father had packed the woodstack also in the stable; but there is not enough to carry us through a long winter. We did right, therefore, in thinking of closing the trap at the times when we have no urgent need of fire; as we have reason to fear that our fuel may run short, it is a good thing to be able to keep out the cold. Fortunately, the snow, which imprisons us, also shelters us. I am sur-

prised that we feel the cold so little, buried up as we are. "That is why," my grandfather observed, "the young wheat gets through the winter so well." We will do the same. We will lie snug and close all the winter, and in spring we will put our heads out of the window. But what a wearisome time we have to get through till then; and God grant that that may be all we have to suffer!

To make up for the wood we have a heap of fir-cones, which I partly collected myself, to burn at the village. It is a mere chance they were not taken there. And in short, if we are driven to it, we shall not hesitate to burn the hay-racks and the mangers in the stable. When it becomes a question of life and death, we must not look too closely at trifles; we shall be acting like the navigators who cast their cargoes into the sea.

Our people had already in part unfurnished the chalet. What we regret the least, is the great caldron for making cheese. They have left us a few necessary kitchen utensils; and besides, a hatchet all jagged at the edges, and a saw which will hardly cut. We have each of us a pocket-knife. Although our housekeeping articles are very incomplete, we shall manage to get on with these. We much more regret the provisions: ours are but scanty. What a pity we could only find three loaves, of the sort which are kept for a whole year in the mountain, and which are obliged at last to be chopped up with a hatchet! We also found plenty of salt, a small quantity of ground coffee, five bottles of old white wine, a little oil, and a small stock of pork lard.

We have only one bed, but we sleep at our ease. According to our mountain custom, it is big enough to hold five or six persons. It stands in the corner of our only living-room, which is also the kitchen and the cheese factory. Only one blanket has been left us; if it is not enough, we must make use of hay and straw. "I only wish," I said, "that I could do as the marmots do, go to sleep and remain torpid until the return of spring."

November 26.—While examining the state of our furniture and our provisions, I have searched into every corner, to see if I could not find some books. I knew that my father never went up to the chalet without taking with him a Bible and several religious books, which he read to his workmen on Sundays, to supply in some degree the public service which they attend in the village. But, apparently, he had sent his little library away.

We much regretted, in our solitary prison, not having this means of sustaining and consoling ourselves during our long watches. To-day, having noticed, behind the old oak wardrobe, a plank which somebody had stuck there out of the way, I pulled it out, thinking that it might serve some useful purpose. With it, there fell down an old dusty book which must have been lost and forgotten for several years. It was a Bible.

November 27.—Continually snowing! It is

rare to see so great a quantity fall even at this season, and on the mountains. In spite of that, I cannot get over my surprise at my father's not coming to our assistance, nor can I help expressing it. Hitherto, my grandfather has not allowed me to perceive his uneasiness; our conversation to-day has shown that he is not less alarmed than myself.

"In fact," I said, "this immense fall of snow did not come all at once. On the first, the second, and even the third day of our captivity, they might, one would think, have cleared a path up to the chalet."

"I am certain," said my grandfather, "that Francois has done all he could; but perhaps he could not get our friends and neighbours to share his fears, and it was out of his power to rescue us without assistance."

"Do you believe that, if it had been possible to fetch us away, they would have left us here, at the risk of finding us dead in the spring? Can they be less humane than the persons of whom we read in the newspapers, who make the greatest exertions, often at the peril of their lives, to save some unfortunate fellow-creature who is buried in a mine, in digging a well, or under a vault which has fallen in?"

"I grant, my dear Louis, that our position is very sad; but, after all, they know that we are under shelter, and have some provisions."

We went on for some time in this strain. When my grandfather was silent, I took his hands in mine, and said:

"Hide nothing from me, I entreat you. Tell me, are you not quite as uneasy as I am? Speak frankly. I am able to bow with resignation to the will of God; I therefore deserve your confidence. Acquaint me with your suppositions, and do not let me torment myself with my own alone. I had rather look misfortune full in the face, and know what you really think."

"Well, my poor boy, I cannot deny that I fear some accident has happened to your father. Now it has come to this, I had better tell you so at once. But, in short, I hardly know what to think of it; because, in default of him, other persons ought to have borne us in mind."

At this, I could restrain my tears and sobs no longer. My grandfather allowed me to give way to my grief. The fire went out as we sat before it. We remained there in the dark, till it was quite late. My grandfather kept one of my hands in his, pressing it from time to time.

"I have told you my fears," he said, at last; "but do not forget that I still have hopes. We cannot tell what unforeseen cause may have prevented their coming. All may yet turn out well. Put your trust in Providence."

December 1.—I cannot conquer the terror which seizes me as I write this date. If some of the November days appeared so long and wearisome, what will they be this month! At least it would be bearable if we were sure this were the last of our captivity! But I no longer dare fix any term to it. The snow is heaped up to such a height that it looks as if it would take the whole summer long to melt it. It is

now on a level with the roof; and if I did not get up every day to clear the chimney, we should soon be unable to open the trap or to light a fire.

It vexes me that my grandfather cannot sometimes step out of this confined vault into the open air. I asked him this morning what he longed for the most, and he said, "A ray of sunshine. Nevertheless," he added, "our lot is much less wretched than that of very many prisoners, a number of whom have not deserved imprisonment any more than we have. We enjoy a certain amount of liberty in our seclusion, and we find subjects of amusement which are not attainable inside the four walls of a dungeon; we are not visited every day by a suspicious or cruel or even an indifferent gaoler. The evils which we suffer from the hand of God have never the bitterness of those which we believe we may attribute to the injustice of men; and lastly, my boy, we are not in solitary confinement; and, if your presence here causes me to feel regret for your sake, which I make no attempt to conceal, it also sustains me, and is almost necessary to my existence. I do not think you are very dissatisfied with your companion; everything about us, even up to Blanchette, is some alleviation to our captivity, and I assure you it is not merely for her milk's sake that I feel attached to her."

These last words set me thinking, and I proposed to let the poor creature live more in our company. "She is uncomfortable all alone in the stable," I said; "she bleats frequently, and that may do her harm, and us also. What is there to hinder us from letting her have a corner here? There is plenty of room for all of us. She will be much obliged to us for the honour we do her." I nailed a little manger against the wall, in the corner where she would be the least in our way, fixing it firmly with a couple of stakes; and, without further delay, introduced Blanchette into our sitting-room.

How delighted she is at the change! She does nothing but thank us, in her way. If it went on so, she would become fatiguing; but when she is accustomed to her novel position, she will be quieter. At this very moment, while I am committing these details to paper, she is lying on some fresh litter, chewing the cud peaceably, and gazing at me so contentedly that she seems to guess I am writing her history. Hitherto, she has wanted for nothing, and at least there is one happy being inside the chalet.

December 3.—The sunshine to-day attracted me out on the roof. Cold dry weather has succeeded to the continued snow-storms. How my eyes were dazzled by the great white expanse, and how beautiful the forest looked! I hardly dared mention to grandfather the delight it gave me; but it suggested that I might dig away the snow in front of the door, and make a sloping path upwards from it to the surface of the snowdrift. I have already set to work, and my grandfather will soon enjoy

what he has long been wishing for, a ray of sunshine.

December 4.—My task progresses; I labour at it as long as my grandfather will allow. The idea had struck him before it occurred to me, and I have scolded him for not communicating it. He was afraid that the exertion and the moisture to my feet might do me harm.

December 5.—We can step out of our house; the path is made; I have had the pleasure of leading my grandfather along it, supporting him on one side. We remained several minutes at the end of our avenue, which is not long; but the day was gloomy, and it made us very sad to see the black forest, the cloudy sky, and the snow surrounding us with the silence of death. We beheld only one living creature, a bird of prey, which passed at a distance with a hoarse scream. It flew down towards the valley in the direction of our village. The pagans would have derived some omen from it, but we have no such superstition.

December 9.—What a dreadful day! I had yet to learn what a hurricane up in the mountains was like. I can hardly describe what passed out of doors. We heard a frightful roaring. When we tried to open the door ajar, the chalet was filled with a whirlwind of snow; the wind rushed in with such fury that we had great difficulty in closing the door again. We were obliged to drop the trap of the chimney; and, besides, it was impossible to light a fire, because the smoke was continually driven down again. We ate our milk without boiling it. My grandfather keeps up my courage by his calm behaviour, as well as by his grave and pious words. At the time when one would say that the wrath of God was hanging over us, he speaks to me of His compassion and His mercy. On trying a second time to open the door, we found that a mass of snow had fallen back upon it, so that we are completely imprisoned, as before. What I most regret is my window; it is drifted up again. Decidedly, as soon as the weather permits, I will make a fresh attempt to regain a little light and liberty.

December 11.—The cold is much sharper. Although we are buried under the snow, which perhaps prevents our hearing the storm, the frost strikes to our very bones. My grandfather says that, to be felt so keenly inside the chalet, the cold must be extremely intense. He supposes that the wind has changed to the north.

December 13.—I was milking the goat, while my grandfather lighted the fire. Suddenly, she pricked up her ears, as if she heard some extraordinary noise. She trembled violently from head to foot.

"What is the matter, Blanchette?" I asked, caressing her. I could now hear the noises; they were low and distant howlings, which gradually grew louder and louder. We then heard hundreds of feet pattering on the crisp snow overhead; we heard a rush of animals, a fierce struggle above us, mingled with horrid cries that made my blood run cold.

"What is that?" I asked, though I knew what it must be, without asking.

"Hush! The wolves!" said my grandfather in a whisper, blowing out the light and extinguishing the fire. "Keep Blanchette quiet; take her in your arms, and give her a little salt to lick, to keep her from bleating."

PAY FOR YOUR PLACES.

IN a former number of this periodical,* the present writer endeavoured to illustrate the great injustice and the evil working of the purchase system in the commissioned ranks of the British army. Nearly twenty years' experience in the service has convinced him that whatever other reforms our military organisation has need of, all changes which leave promotion by purchase part of our army code, are and will be in vain. Not only is the law which allows an officer who has a certain sum of money at command to pass over the head of all those who cannot command that amount, a standing disgrace to our service and to our country, but it is the leaven of evil which has leavened the whole lump of our regimental system high and low, from the colonel to the private.

Take, for instance, the humbler ranks of the service; what is it that prevents young men of what may be called the lower middle class—the sons of small farmers, petty shopkeepers, and such-like—from enlisting in our army? Here and there an individual of this standing may be found, but seldom or never one who has entered the army with the intention of making it his calling for life. How many of this class ever rise? How many even hope ever to rise, in the profession of arms? Yet, is not an increase of this class much wanted in our ranks, and would it not tend to diminish greatly the number of inmates in our military prisons, the number of offenders against military law? Do not this class flock in thousands to Canada, to Australia, to wherever English pluck and English strength are likely to push men on in the world? How is it, then, that more of this raw material does not find its way into our army? The reply is easy; so plain, that any child may read it. There is virtually no advancement for our non-commissioned officers to the higher ranks; and even if one of that excellent class—than which there does not exist a more praiseworthy set of men in the world—does obtain a commission, he is perforce obliged to remain in the junior ranks; for, without money, there is—unless in rare and exceptional cases—no promotion in the English army.

Like most military men, the writer is pretty well acquainted with the contents of the Army List, but from first to last of that compendious volume, he does not know a single individual who from the ranks has risen to be a field-

officer. Here and there—they might be counted on one's fingers—there exists a captain who was once a non-commissioned officer, and who, after obtaining his commission—after being purchased over again and again by his juniors who were probably not born when he commenced soldiering—has at last attained unto the rank of captain; only, however, to retire from the service as soon as possible, being already too old for active service of any kind. Of subalterns there are certainly some—two for each regiment is above the average—who have risen from the ranks; but these, after a few years, invariably become spiritless soldiers and hopeless men, for they are aware that, not having money, they can advance no higher in their profession. In fact, a non-commissioned officer is seldom promoted until he is an elderly man. The writer knows a cavalry quartermaster who enlisted as a private dragoon in 1822; but was only promoted to be a commissioned officer thirty-one years later, when he was upwards of fifty years of age. If this man, who saw plenty of active service a quarter of a century before he got his commission, was fit to promote so late in life, surely he was so at an earlier period. Another gallant officer of his acquaintance who enlisted in 1812, went through several campaigns in India, but only obtained a commission in the year of grace 1844. The truth is—as the upholders of the purchase system maintain—the non-commissioned officers of the English army, as a body, care little to be promoted; for they know full well that, not having money, they cannot hold their own in the race for further advancement. Such a thing as a poor but well-educated young man enlisting in the English army, and working his way by degrees through the non-commissioned ranks until, whilst yet in the prime of life, he attains the rank of field-officer, is unheard of in our service; were it otherwise, how much easier would be the recruiting-sergeant's task; how much fewer the punishments in our regiments! At present, a few sanguine individuals of a better class of life than the ordinary run of our recruits do occasionally enlist, chiefly in our dragoon regiments; but these seldom or ever remain longer in the service than they can help, for they see how utterly useless it is to hope for advancement without money in the English army.

Our neighbours manage these matters much better. Very many young Frenchmen, of good birth and fair education, join the army as volunteer recruits, sure that in due time, with good behaviour, they will rise even to the highest ranks.

It is not the wish of the writer of these lines to see the whole British army officered by men who have served in the ranks. But he looks upon the purchase system as one which must be abolished before the English military service can become what it ought to be. All the late rules and regulations regarding the examination of

* See Money or Merit, volume iii., page 30.

candidates for commissions and for subsequent promotion, although good in themselves, are powerless for any real good, so long as money remains a *sine qua non* for advancement.

There can be no doubt that if the working of the purchase system were understood in all its injustice by the English public, it would no longer be allowed to disgrace our service. Amongst such members of the legislature as have never held commissions, the subject has been very little understood hitherto. And, strange to say, there appears to be amongst civilians of all classes an undefined idea that, if done away with, promotion by purchase must be replaced by promotion by favouritism. It is difficult to say wherefore this notion has got abroad, unless it be that the general ignorance which exists regarding military matters in England has led men to imagine that one evil cannot be abolished without a still greater one taking its place. Not, however, that such would be the case if purchase gave way to selection; for, at the present day, public opinion has so much to say to the acts of public men, that any undue act of favouritism in the promotion of officers would most certainly meet with exposure.

Why imagine that promotion by selection must necessarily take the place of promotion by purchase? There are four large bodies of English military men, second to none in all military virtues both in camp and quarters, in which officers have never yet been promoted either by purchasing over the heads of their poorer comrades, or by trusting to the favour of friends in power. These four are the Royal Artillery, Royal Engineers, Royal Marines, and the East India Army. In these services—and do more honourable corps exist in the world?—although officers are selected to fill staff and other situations according to their merit, yet no man can supersede his senior in regular promotion, either by money at his banker's or interest at the Horse Guards. Why should this rule not be extended to the whole English army? If Lieutenant A., after seven, eight, or nine years' service, and after rising to the top of the list of subalterns, is not fit to be promoted to the rank of captain, be assured that he is unfit to hold any commission whatever, and the sooner his services are dispensed with the better for the public that pays him. The upholders of promotion by purchase maintain that the seniority system will keep officers in the junior ranks, owing to there not being sufficient inducement held out for the seniors to retire, until they are too old to be of any good if called into the field. But can this be said of any one of the four services enumerated above? Merely to name these corps is to call forth memories of wars, and campaigns, and fights, and battles, and heroic deeds, such as the world has seldom seen equalled. It would be impossible to recal an instance in which an officer of one of these corps has failed in his duty on account of old age. But the possibility of such an event would be prevented by obliging all

officers to retire from active service after a certain age, and to allow them—as would be but fair and just—an adequate pension after they retire. Nor would this be a heavy tax upon the public; for, long after an officer is too old for the more active duties of his profession, he is quite young enough to superintend recruiting, to look after barracks, to perform the duties of garrison adjutant, town major, or commandant of depôts, most, if not all of which are duties now performed by young, or comparatively young, men, who have interest to obtain such appointments. Of the field officers, adjutants, and captains now commanding and doing duty at the depôts in Great Britain—certain never to be sent abroad—the great majority are young, hale men; whereas many officers, worn down by climate and hard work, are, and have been for years, doing duty with their corps in the most unhealthy climates of the world. Thus, purchase in the English army does not prevent favouritism existing whenever it can find a footing in the service.

In a recent debate in the House of Commons on the subject of promotion by purchase, a member, speaking in favour of the system, said that he could hardly conceive a more discordant body of men in the world than an English body of officers in which certain members of the corps had been selected for promotion over the heads of others. This may be true enough, and the argument might hold good, if those who, wishing the purchase system to be abolished, advocate promotion by selection taking its place. But, has the honourable member ever lived—as the writer has, more than once during his military career—in a regiment, several officers of which had, for want of means, been superseded by their juniors? If so, he will have some idea to what length hatred, envy, malice, and all uncharitableness can be carried by those who, at other times, are on the best of terms with each other. Moreover, he most distinctly asserts that he has witnessed amongst military men more quarrels and ill will caused by questions of exchange and promotion by purchase than by any other cause whatever. In one instance, the junior of his corps purchasing over the senior major, obtained command of the regiment, and commanded one who had formerly commanded him. The senior major was a Waterloo officer, had fought in Spain under Wellington, in India under Gough, and at the Cape under Smith. He had been thirty years in the service in the same corps, and had more than once led the regiment into action. But he had not fourteen hundred pounds at his command. The junior major who superseded him had been only ten years in the army, and being but twenty-six years of age, must have been born four years after his senior entered the service. But he had the requisite fourteen hundred pounds.

On another occasion the writer recollects a corps stationed in India, in which a lieutenant of seven years' service superseded, by purchasing over their heads, no fewer than eleven of his com-

rades, the senior of which had been twenty, and two others had each been seventeen, years in the army. Is it to be supposed for an instant that promotions like these—promotions, be it remembered, which are the legitimate consequences of the purchase system, and which have only become more rare in consequence of the casualties in the Crimea, or in India, but which will return in plenty in times of peace—is it to be supposed for an instant that such promotions do not cause ill-blood amongst those who are superseded?

Take three instances—all of which the writer has known in the army—in which officers have been obliged to leave the service. A lieutenant-colonel commanding a cavalry regiment, lost a suit in Chancery which had been bequeathed to him by his father. To pay all he owed, he sold everything he had in the world, intending to exchange into a regiment in India, and there live by his profession on the increased pay which military men serving in that country receive. This, however, was not enough for his creditors. His commission was a marketable commodity, and, as such, they obliged him to sell it and make over the proceeds to them, leaving himself without either means or a profession. The second case was that of a captain of infantry, who had become security for his brother's debts. The brother died; there was something or other informal in the life insurance policy with which his liabilities were covered, and the brother in the army had to pay the debts, to effect which his creditors obliged him to sell his commission. The third instance which the writer recollects was still more severe, inasmuch as there were three sufferers, all brothers, all in the army, and all joint trustees for the property of some orphan relatives. The attorney to whom they entrusted the business decamped, and to make good what he had absconded with, all three brothers had to sell out of the army. In no other profession, or in no other country, would men have to abandon their means of living in order to pay even their own, far less the debts of others.

If commissions in the army are to be had if promotion in the service is to be obtained—by purchase, let us at least be consistent, and not allow poor men to mix with the wealthy. Nay, let us go further than this, and oblige every young man who obtains a commission to deposit in the public funds at least enough money to purchase him up to the top of his profession. Should he retire before he obtains the rank of lieutenant-colonel, his money will be returned to him, and the money of those who take his place will replace it. Thus, in any case, we shall be spared the private heart-burnings, and the national disgrace of seeing officers who have money supersede those who have none, or who have little. If, on the other hand, we want our army to be what it ought, and to be officered by men who can trust to nothing but professional qualifications for their advancement, let us for ever abolish a system which, to say the best of it, is a miserable remainder of corrupt days, when all

public places and posts were bought, sold, and exchanged for money. If military appointments are to be sold, why not sell those in the civil service—Treasury and Post-office clerkships, consul and vice-consulships, custom-house officers' berths, tide-waiters' situations, and chaplains' commissions? Let one and all be tarified, and no promotion take place in any department unless a certain regulation price is paid for the advancement. Why should the English army alone be disgraced by the table of rates, or Prices of Commissions, which figures at the end of every Army List? Let us, at any rate, be consistent; and, if we are to have any situations under government bought and sold, let all be bought and sold.

REAL MYSTERIES OF PARIS AND LONDON.

Nor mysteries of crime; no account of secret societies that exist in the heart of London—the Odd-Fellows, the Druids, the Codgers, the Foresters, the Rum Pum Pas; no revelations of unknown horrors going on in the innermost recesses of Paris; no trackings out of hidden villanies perpetrated in nooks and corners of that city—no one of these things is going just now to be made the subject of discussion. Nor are the wonderful mechanical but hidden contrivances by which the inhabitants of these two cities are supplied with gas and water, nor the secrets of the great sewers, of the Morgue, of the Dark Arches, to be treated of in this paper. The shut-up and deserted houses in Stamford-street, Blackfriars-road, London, again, it might be legitimately supposed, were likely to be included in our mysteries of London. Those houses in rows of two or three together which no human being ever enters, which are black and horrible to look at, which have not one single pane of unbroken glass in any one of their windows, and the floors of whose rooms must be covered with the missiles by which the glass was broken. Those houses are said to belong to an eccentric old lady. It is a question whether old ladies, as a class, are to be trusted with house property. We all remember that terrible old lady whom we used to be so afraid of when we were little, who used to live in the house with the boarded up windows, and whose hollow-sounding knocker used to be plied all day by the boy population of the neighbourhood. Enough of this old lady, however. The mysteries proposed to be dealt with are of a more familiar and less alarming kind than the Stamford-street houses, but they are none the less deep and inscrutable for all that.

Now there are some mysteries which I do not expect to have explained to me. I am content to receive them, abandoning all hope of comprehension. They are too much for me, and I make no secret that they are so. To this class belongs the mystery of India. This country seems to consider India, and India alone, as important. Every family sends some of its members to India. We fight for India, with

India, in India; we impoverish ourselves (domestically) to pay for the Indian servants who fan our sons who are slowly dying in India, and of India. They come back sick, with ruined constitutions, from India. They contract tremendously expensive habits in India, and cannot shake them off when they return to the comparatively unimportant mother country. It is no matter, all must be borne, all must be done, for India.

Now, one of the mysteries which I do not ask to have explained to me, and to which I am wholly resigned, lies in this belief in India. I cannot understand it. I can comprehend that a certain number of valuable and desirable articles come to us from India, but they do not seem worth all this fuss. One can get through a day magnificently, without India. One can eat, drink, and be clothed luxuriously, without India: one can be amused without India. It seems to me that we go through all I have spoken of above, and a great deal more, for the sake of a few jewels, a lot of Cashmere shawls which nobody can afford to buy, and for those everlasting species concerning the importation of which we used to learn so much at school. These things are very important, no doubt, but are they important enough to produce the sensation they do? We keep up armies and expend millions for the sake of some drugs, for wonderful things called jute, and turmeric, and for Indigo. This Indigo, by-the-by, is another mystery. What inconceivable importance seems to attach to this blue dye! If we supported nature by dying ourselves blue, if everything we wore were of a dark-blue tinge, if the whole nation were dressed after the fashion of the Metropolitan Police force—if all these things were so, we could hardly make more fuss than we do about Indigo. The City of London seems altogether devoted to Indigo, and if you go into the docks and ask what all the bales of goods contain, the answer is Indigo, Indigo, Indigo. American cotton, tea from China, sugar from the West Indies,—these are things the importance of which one understands, but the degree of sacrifice that is cheerfully made for India remains still a great and terrible mystery.

It is one, however, which I am content to leave unapproached, and to abandon as one does parliamentary and pecuniary mysteries, prices of stocks, the English funds, and other hopeless matters. But there are some secrets which one is less resigned about, some riddles which one is more impatient to solve, some "Mysteries of London" which it really disturbs one's peace of mind to have to abandon as inexplicable.

The perfumers' shops! How are they kept up? In one street in London (it is called Bond-street), I myself have counted seven large perfumers' shops, and six more which I do not take into account because they are hair-cutting temples as well. Seven enormous old-established shops, in one street, for the sale of perfumery! What can this mean? Would not any one in the world have thought that one single shop on the scale of a Bond-street Em-

porium would alone have proved enough, not only for all England, but for all the world? How few people we know, are perfumed. How many there are in good circumstances who never buy a bottle of scent from one year's end to another, unless it is a bottle of eau-de-Cologne or lavender-water. Think of these shops, of Rimmel's in the Strand, of Hendrie's and many more in Regent-street and elsewhere, is it not wonderful how they are all maintained?

But if the perfumers are a mystery of an unfathomable nature, what shall we say of the silversmiths and jewellers in Oxford-street? How seldom people want the wares sold by these gentry; and when they do want such matters, do they employ a small and unknown tradesman? Surely not. When any of our friends require a silver teapot or half a dozen spoons, do they not go to Messrs. Hunt and Roskell, or Mr. Hancock, and buy them there? What, then, is the secret of those silversmiths' shops in Oxford-street, with their windows full of what appears to represent thousands of pounds' worth of property? Perhaps, if you wanted a sixpenny watch-key in a great hurry, you might go to one of these glittering warehouses; but their proprietors will hardly get rich upon such dealings. You give these desperate tradesmen a job, only when some emergency obliges you, when that knob on the teapot lid comes off for the hundredth time, or when you want a glass to your watch. But who buys the hundreds of gilt clocks with inaccuracy written in legible characters on their faces? Who purchases the cheap gold watches, and abandons his appointments thenceforth for ever? Who is in a hurry to possess himself of one of those silver butter-knives, warranted to cut always too much butter or too little, warranted also to swerve wildly away in the winter season when the butter is hard, and to come out of the mother-of-pearl handle once every calendar month without fail?

These are awful questions, but still more terrible questions remain. Is it possible that one of these incomprehensible dealers ever uses his shop as a blind, and is really engaged in some nefarious business by which he makes his living? Does he steal out in the dead of night and engage in body-snatching? Does he sing comic songs at a music hall? Does he lend money in the back shop on the usual terms—"fifty poundsh down, my dear, and fifty poundsh in peautiful gilt clocksh, and plated putter-knives"—a loan to be repaid, by the "brisk minor" who contracts it, with his very life-blood?

At the back of that suburban terrace, in which it is my fortune to reside when in London, is a row of shops which supply the neighbourhood with all the things they want, and in some cases with a few articles, as it would appear, which they do not want. In that small row there are two (and used to be three) enormous medical halls or chemists' shops. Next to the luxury of a club-house, or of the abode of a stockbroker on the eve of ruin, comes the gorgeousness of those two temples of phar-

macy. You are bewildered on entering them by the blaze of glass and gilding, you are rendered faint by delicious odours, you are restored again by draughts of medicated waters which gush forth into long tumblers at the touching of a spring. Now, how are these palaces kept going? I pass them often, but never see any one making a purchase or giving an order. Their proprietors, too—both profoundly miserable men; one being a specimen of pale misery, and the other, which is much more terrible, of rosy misery—are for ever increasing their expenditure, and whenever Floridus gets a new scent-bottle and sticks it in his window, or a flesh-brush, or a galvanic battery, or what not, Pallidus is obliged to follow his lead, and the next day the same goods will appear in his shop as surely as the morning comes round.

Now, the reason why it seems so extraordinary and mysterious that these two druggists are able to keep their heads above water is, that it appears to the writer that every member of his acquaintance gets his or her medicines either from Bell and Co., or from Messrs. Savory and Moore, as the case may be. It is true that on one occasion, when I had been dining with the Surgit Amaris, that eminent Greek firm in the City, and found on my return that I had no carbonate of soda in the house,—it is true that I then rushed forth in wild haste, and luckily finding—it was Saturday night—that the emporium of the rosy sufferer was still open, I purchased an ounce of the medicine of which my heated frame stood in need. It is impossible to describe the sensation made by the giving of this order. A boy, pining in secret behind a desk, sprang suddenly into life, and instantly summoned the great Floridus himself from the back parlour, where he was perhaps supping on rose lozenges and Iceland moss, washed down with soda-water from the fountain. Both man and boy were kept in violent commotion for at least ten minutes, by my order. It was entered in books—double-entered, perhaps—the drug itself was wrapped in paper, and the parcel so made was lapped up at the end, then the soda was shaken down into the lapped up end, at which point Floridus made a remark upon the weather, and I, looking round the shop, and noting its magnificence, hoped that the medicine would not come to less than fourpence. The parcel was now lapped up at the other end and shaken down in turn to that extremity, when Floridus made a second remark on the weather, including the subject of crops, and I, seeing that another piece of magnificent paper was going to be pressed into the service, began to think that I should feel miserable if my purchase came to less than sixpence. When an outer paper, thick and soft and smooth, was laid upon the counter, and the already sufficiently protected soda was placed upon it, I would have given much to have been allowed to clutch my purchase, pay my money, and rush out of the shop. But this was not to be. New expenses must be incurred by the firm with which I was dealing, in supplying me with a coloured wrapper over

all, in vast outlays of sealing-wax, and, finally, in the addition of an adhesive label, with "Carbonate of Soda" engraved upon it in the best style of printing. When the miserable Floridus announced that all this only came to THREE pence (it would have been a relief if he had said "threppence"), I felt that men had sunk into the earth for less offences than I had been guilty of in making such a purchase.

There are other mysteries of London besides the chemists' shops. Who finds the money—and delights to spend it—that keeps on foot those newspapers of which we are told authoritatively that "they don't pay?" Who are the people who are always ready to come forward with the means of supporting the insolvent management of a theatre? Such capitalists are always forthcoming at a pinch. Where are they to be heard of?

The print trade, again. Who buys those proofs before letters which issue from time to time upon the London world? How few people one knows, who purchase prints. In how few houses do you see them hanging up. Our friends' walls are not decorated thus: with bad pictures—yes; but with prints—no.

Take the fur trade, again. How is that sustained? How are expensive premises in fashionable situations maintained by selling furs? It is a ghastly sight, in the summer months, to see a heated shopkeeper emerge from the door of his warehouse and stand by the side of the stuffed lion, whom the moths are at work at, gazing out upon the world of London from under his awning! A fur shop with an awning! How that shopman must hate those hot stuffed animals by which he is surrounded. How glad he must be that the moths are slowly sapping away the foundations of the lion's tail, and exposing the stuffing of the Polar bear to the eye of the curious.

These are some of the mysteries of London. There are many more. What do the bakers do with the rows of loaves which one sometimes sees round their shelves at the decline of day, still unsold? What becomes of your unpurchased bun? Who buys the cabbages, gigantic cart-loads of which are imported into the metropolis? Who ever sees a cabbage at table? Who ever orders a cabbage for dinner? Lastly, how is the great tailoring firm of Joses and Son, in whose shop no human being is ever seen—how is that kept up, and in such splendid preservation?

But if these mysteries of commercial London are profound and hard of solution, what are those of Paris? If the whole population of Paris were supported, fed, nourished, clothed, lodged, and washed, with jewellery, it would but hardly and unsatisfactorily account for the number, the incalculable number, of the jewellers' shops with which—now more than ever—the metropolis of France is furnished. The Boulevard from one end to the other is all a-blaze with gold and jewellery; and as to the Rue de la Paix and the Palais Royal—But let us, being on the spot, take a walk round the enclosure of the Palais Royal, and note the exact nature of the different emporiums which surround this Walhalla of luxury.

The first shop we come to, is one wholly unknown in our native land; it is an Order dépôt, a little shop, full of bits of coloured ribbon and medals or grand crosses; and as everybody in France is décoré, it is probable that a brisk business is done in supplying the distinguished personages who may send round for an order at any moment, and who may not like to be kept waiting. Next to the Order dépôt, there is a wig shop, and then comes a china gimcrack shop, and then a jeweller's, and then comes a sloop-shop for ready-made clothes, and then an opera-glass vendor's, and then a gimcrack shop, and then a jeweller's, and then a shop like Mechi's in Regent-street, and then a jeweller's, and then a jeweller's, and then a jeweller's, and then a jeweller's, and then a jeweller's, and then a jeweller's, and then another gimcrack shop, and then another gimcrack shop, and then a jeweller's, and then a gimcrack shop, and then a jeweller's, and then an opera-glass shop, and after that a gimcrack shop, and then a jeweller's, and then a jeweller's, and then a sloop-shop, and then a jeweller's, and then a jeweller's, and then a jeweller's, and then a jeweller's, and then a jeweller's, and then a jeweller's, and then a jeweller's, and then a jeweller's, and then another Mechi shop, and then another Order dépôt, and then a jeweller's, succeeded by an opera-glass shop, a watchmaker's, a Mechi shop, an artificial teeth purveyor's, a sloop-shop, and then a jeweller's. After this comes a perfumer's, and then a Mechi shop, and then a jeweller's, and then a silversmith's, and then a jeweller's, and then a gimcrack shop, and then a jeweller's, and then a jeweller's, and then a jeweller's, and then a jeweller's, a Mechi shop next, a silversmith's, and then a jeweller's; and then a photograph shop, and then a jeweller's; and then a watchmaker's, and then a jeweller's; and then a gimcrack shop, and then a sloop-shop. At last—we have been travelling all this time down one side of the Palais Royal only—at last the café at the corner.

Now, is it to be expected that one is to sit down tamely, under such a state of things as this? But the worst of it is, that this is not all. The Rue de Rivoli, which is about two miles long, is full of jewellers' shops. The line of Boulevard, which is much longer, glitters again with jewellers' shops, and in the short space of the Rue de la Paix there are no less than sixteen of these Temples of Bewilderment. Fifty jewellers' shops in the Palais Royal, and sixteen in the Rue de la Paix, and how many more in the different Passages and the minor streets, besides the Boulevard and the Rue de Rivoli!

Who can account for the bonbon shops—those palaces almost more magnificent than the warehouses of the jewellers themselves, those huge chocolate and sweetmeat deposits, where bilious women all alike, bilious themselves.

dispensers of bile to others, sit behind counters in a state of chronic nausea horrible to think of?—Stay! A thought! These retailers of bile are jewelled, and the retailers of jewels again are, to a man, bilious. Do the jewellers and the bonbon vendors mutually support each other? Do they make exchanges, and swap bonbons for jewellery, and vice versâ? Unhappily, even this would not account sufficiently for the difficulty we are considering. If the bilious women were clothed from head to foot with gold, and if the jewellers supported life—horrible thought—on chocolate drops only, it still would not account for the phenomena with which we are puzzling ourselves.

There is one more thing which surely we may be allowed to class among the mysteries of Paris. The hidden pecuniary resources of the men in the blue blouses. The writer of these words wears a beautiful black coat, but he is unable to afford himself the luxuries that these men indulge in. What dinners they order at the restaurant! What good places they occupy at the theatre! What pleasant drives they take in open carriages on Sundays!

Now surely Eugène Sue's mysteries of Paris are trifles to such profound difficulties as are presented by these commercial riddles. There is one more, which, applying equally to London and Paris, may, in conclusion, be whispered in the reader's ear. In what region of the earth, in what particular tunnelled-out portion of its bowels, do those hackney-carriages, whose numbers come before the thousands, ply for hire? Many and many is the time that these weary bones have sunk upon the sordid plush of your cab, your remise, or your fiacre, but never to my knowledge has one of those vehicles rejoiced in a number even so low as five hundred. Where does number fifty work, number twenty, ten, one? Has anybody ever seen these numbers on any hired carriage? Has anybody ever inhaled the air (with its combined flavour of bedding and manure) which the interiors of all the cab tribes exhibit, and which, if the earliest numbers have been longest on the road, must be in great perfection in the individual specimens here alluded to?

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